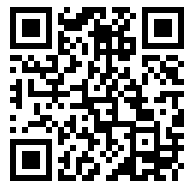
This is a reproduction of a library book that was digitized by Google as part of an ongoing effort to preserve the information in books and make it universally accessible.

Google™ books

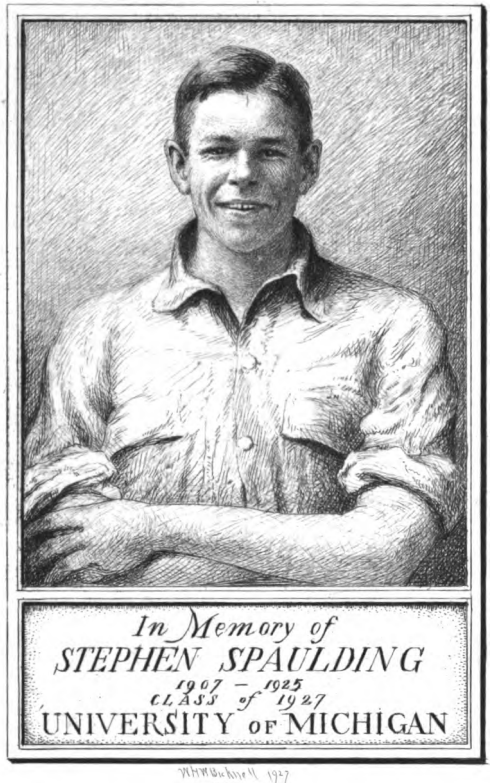
https://books.google.com



A 445303



Digitized by Google



In Memory of
STEPHEN SPAULDING
1907 – 1925
CLASS of 1927
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

UA
652
.S73
J8

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

HISTORY

OF THE

SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE REGIMENT.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



38th Regiment of Foot, 1742

Digitized by Google

A

History

of the

South Staffordshire Regiment

(1705-1923.)

By

JAMES P. JONES

(Author, *History of Tettenhall*, *Heart of the Midlands*, etc.)

With Plates and Maps.

WHITEHEAD BROTHERS (Wolverhampton) Ltd.,
St. John's Square,
Wolverhampton.

PRINTED IN ENGLAND

Digitized by Google



38th Regiment of Foot, 1742

Digitized by Google

A

History

of the

South Staffordshire Regiment

(1705-1923.)

By

JAMES P. JONES

(Author, *History of Tettenhall*, *Heart of the Midlands*, etc.)

With Plates and Maps.

WHITEHEAD BROTHERS (Wolverhampton) Ltd.,
St. John's Square,
Wolverhampton.

Digitized by Google

First published, July, 1923.

S514 23

Digitized by Google

O.S.S.-39 11 EC

To

THE OFFICERS,

WARRANT OFFICERS, N.C.O.'S AND MEN

OF THE

SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE REGIMENT.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Stephen Spaulding Mem. Coll.
Edwards
4-6-39

SS1423

FOREWORD.

IN compiling this history, the author has rendered a great service to the South Staffordshire Regiment, and made a valuable contribution to the history of the County where the Regiment was first raised.

I would commend his book in the first instance to the Officers, Warrant Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers and men, past, present, and future, of the Regiment; in the hope that this record of the great achievements of their predecessors will stimulate in them that pride of their Regiment which is the foundation of all true *esprit-de-corps*, and that it will be a great incentive to those who follow to emulate and, if possible, surpass those deeds which have won the Regiment "immortal fame."

Secondly, it should be in every Library, public and private, in the County of Staffordshire, for it is a history of the deeds of Staffordshire men, many long since passed away, the memory of whose bravery and heroism will never die.

It is a long time from 1705 to 1922, but in that space of 217 years the 38th, or "First Staffordshire Regiment," and the 80th, or "Staffordshire Volunteers," as originally the 1st and 2nd Battalions were respectively called, have carried the name of the County, and the Colours of the Regiment, to victory in every quarter of the globe.

If Rudyard Kipling's words be true, that "on the bones of the English the English Flag is stayed," then every Staffordshire man and woman can say with pride that on the bones of those, such as the men of Staffordshire, the British Empire was built, for there is no Continent or Ocean in which the bones of the men of this grand old County Regiment do not rest.

I would commend this book to every man and woman in Staffordshire, because this Regiment is in a special degree the very bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh. For both the 38th and the 80th were raised by Volunteers from the

Digitized by Google

Staffordshire Militia, the oldest Corps connected with the County, a fact commemorated in the original titles they bore.

Although for many years the system of recruiting for the Army brought in men from all parts of the kingdom, the Staffordshire connection has always been maintained. In times of stress the Regiment ever turned to its parent Militia for men, and never failed to obtain them. Since 1881, when recruiting was localised, and units were apportioned their own Territorial districts, fully 95 per cent. of the men have come from the south of the County; of very few Regiments can this be said.

That the Staffordshire breed of men has never lost its great fighting qualities, the quality of hard, dogged, stubborn tenacity, the achievements of both Battalions in the late Great War abundantly testify. To mention but a few occasions when such characteristics were shown, let us recall the magnificent retreat from Mons, the decisive victory of the Marne, and the immortal first Battle of Ypres.

Although this history is concerned mainly with the 1st and 2nd Battalions, I cannot refrain from expressing the pride with which the Line Battalions saw their parent Militia taking an active and glorious part in the Great War; their pride at the breaking of the Hindenburg Line by their Territorial Battalions, and the heroic deeds of the newly-raised Service Battalions, especially the 7th at the Dardanelles, and the 8th in the Ypres Salient, on the Somme, at Arras, at Paschendaele, and on many other occasions.

In conclusion, I would ask all Staffordshire people who are proud of their County, to remember their gallant Regiment, that has always maintained a leading position in the Army. And especially do I appeal to those who hold high and important positions in the County, and the great towns in the South of the County, from which we draw so many of our splendid men, to remember their old soldiers in their declining years, and when hard times fall upon them.

At the age of 83, and with 67 years past since I joined the Service, I can look back on much that causes me both pleasure and pride during that period. Of those 67 years, since my first Gazette, 50 were spent in active Army service before advancing age necessitated my retirement. Of that half-

Digitized by Google

century, nearly twenty-four years were passed as an Officer in the South Staffordshire Regiment, and during my sixty-seven as a soldier certain episodes stand out prominently in my career as red-letter days. Of these I would mention first, when on July 9th, 1879, I was promoted to the Command of the Old 80th, a post I was proud to hold for five years.

There is no prouder command than that of a Battalion, a good Battalion, and that is of a Staffordshire Battalion. During my period as Commanding Officer, the men under me, men of Staffordshire, were of the best. They undertook and did, willingly and cheerfully, anything they were asked to do. My Non-Commissioned Officers were honest gentlemen. My Officers, it goes without saying, were worthy of the Regiment whose honour they ever upheld.

Another red-letter day came in 1880, when H.M. Queen Victoria appointed me a Companion of the Order of the Bath after the Zulu War. And that decoration was not, I consider, awarded to me personally, but to me, as representing the Regiment, and in recognition of the magnificent work done by my men during that campaign.

Finally, came the great day in 1911, when His Majesty King George V. honoured me and my services by appointing me Colonel of my old Corps. Of all the honours that I have received there is none that I value and appreciate more than this. And when I join my many comrades that have served before me, and sleep my last sleep with, I trust, the sound of the "Last Post" echoing o'er my body, I wish for no better epitaph on my tomb than

"He was Proud to Serve in the South Staffordshire Regiment."

Charles. Tucker. Lieut.-Gen.
Colonel South Staffordshire Regiment.

July, 1922.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

PREFACE.

I WAS induced to write this book when I discovered, in the early days of the Great War, that no History of this grand old County Regiment was in existence. This was the more remarkable from the fact that the South Staffordshire Regiment bears an honourable name in the history of the British Army; seeing that the Regiment since its formation has served all over the world, and has taken part in nearly every War and every Battle in which the British Forces have been engaged for the last two hundred years.

I have endeavoured to write a plain straightforward story of the heroic deeds of the 38th and 80th Regiments, whose fame is unknown outside Military circles, for, unlike some Regiments, they do not advertise themselves—not from lack of honours—but rather, from a reticent pride in what they have accomplished. The story of the 38th and 80th, during the Great War, chiefly follows the Regimental Diaries, but I have, fortunately, been able to supplement this by the inclusion of private Diaries, letters, and other documents sent to me.

The work has been a labour of love, and my self-imposed task has been lightened by the cordial assistance given to me by the Officers of the Regiment, the Records Office, Lichfield, and others who were in a position to help.

Among those to whom I am indebted I must thank, first, Lieut.-Colonel M. B. Savage, C.B.E., D.S.O., (C.O. 2nd Battalion), for without his enthusiastic and ever-ready help this History would have been less complete than it now is; Mrs. J. L. Dent (for permission to print the late Major J. L. Dent's Diary); Brig.-General R. M. Ovens, C.M.G.; Brig.-General C. S. Davidson, C.B.; Brig.-General E. K. Daubeny, C.B.E., D.S.O.; Lieut.-Colonel A. B. Beauman, D.S.O.; Lieut.-Colonel W. R. English-Murphy, D.S.O., M.C.; Major G. de C. Glover, D.S.O., M.C.; Lord Gorell;

Digitized by Google

the Proprietors of *The Illustrated London News*, *Country Life*, *The Graphic*, and *The Staffordshire Advertiser;* A. J. Hardman (for kindly sketching the maps); Lieut.-Colonel Swynfen J. Jervis (for loan of coloured sketch for frontispiece); Captain S. Bradbury, M.C. (Hon. Secretary, O.C. Association); Major G. A. Yool, D.S.O.; the Very Rev. the Dean of Lichfield (for permission to photograph the Regiment's Memorials), and many others who have helped me.

Lieut.-General Sir Charles Tucker, G.C.B., G.C.V.O., very kindly consented to write the Foreword, and to him and Major-General Sir H. A. Raitt, K.C.I.E., C.B., I owe my grateful thanks.

Also to the Regiment and those other Subscribers, whose aid has made its publication possible; to my daughter for compiling the Index; and lastly, to my Printers and Publishers for the care and attention they have given to the work while in the Press.

JAMES P. JONES.

Tettenhall, Staffordshire,
May, 1923.

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS.

PAGES

FOREWORD, BY LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR C. TUCKER, G.C.B., G.C.V.O. - - - - ix.—xi.

PREFACE - - - - - xiii.—xiv.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAPS - xix.—xx.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL MILITARY HISTORY.

Trained Bands—British Army Origin—County Militia—South Staffordshire Regiment: Its Constitution: How it was Formed.

Pages 1—4

CHAPTER II.

THE RAISING OF THE REGIMENT.

West Indies—Guadaloupe—Martinique.
1705—1765.

Pages 5—11

CHAPTER III.

38th at Bunker's Hill—Raising the 80th Foot—In Flanders—Retreat to Bremen—Egypt, the Desert March—Shipwreck—India—38th at Cape of Good Hope—South America—Attack on Buenos Ayres—Capture of Monte Video—Death of Colonel Vassall—Capture of Buenos Ayres—Gallant Work of 38th Foot.
1775—1816.

Pages 12—28

CHAPTER IV.

38th in the Peninsular War—France—Cape of Good Hope—First Burmese War—Capture of Malloon—Central America, 1848—Records Destroyed at Halifax, Nova Scotia.
1808—1854.

Pages 29—51

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IV.

SECTION II.

80th on Home Service—Reform Bill Riots—Convict Guarding in New South Wales—80th's Third Shipwreck—In India—The Sikh War—Battles of Moodkee, Ferozeshah, Sobraon—Second Burmese War.

Pages 52—67

CHAPTER V.

SECTION I.

38th in Crimean War—Indian Mutiny—England, Egypt, 1881-84—The River Column—Kirbekan—Boer War—South Africa. 1854—1914.

Pages 68—97

CHAPTER V.

SECTION II.

80th in Indian Mutiny—Ireland—India—Expedition to Perak—The Zulu War—Ireland—Strike Duty in England—India—South Africa.

Pages 98—120

THE GREAT WAR, 1914-1918.

INTRODUCTORY.

Pages 121—128

THE RECORD OF THE 1ST BATTALION, 1914.

(THE OLD 38TH.)

South Africa—Voyage to England—Lyndhurst Camp—Defence of Antwerp—Ypres, First Battle—Fighting at Kruiseik—Defence of Gheluvelt—Captain J. F. Vallentin Awarded the Victoria Cross—Attack on Well Farm.

Pages 129—158

THE RECORD OF THE 1ST BATTALION, 1915.

Trench Warfare—Battle of Neuve Chapelle—Battle of Festubert—Fighting Round Hooge—Battle of Loos—Attack on the Hohenzollern Redoubt—Capture of The Quarries—Inspected by H.M. King George V. —At the La Bassée Road.

Pages 159—174

Digitized by Google

THE RECORD OF THE 1ST BATTALION, 1916.

Trench Warfare—Bray-sur-Somme—South of Mametz—Battles of the Somme—Capture of Dantzig Alley—Capture of a German Battalion—High Wood—Delville Wood—Capture of Ginchy—Raid on German Trenches—Beaumont Hamel.

Pages 175—192

THE RECORD OF THE 1ST BATTALION, 1917.

Beaumont Hamel—Capture of Munich Trench—The Big German Retreat—Attack on Serre Ridge—Attack on Croisilles—The Fight for Bullecourt—Summer in the Hindenburg Line—Training—The Great Battles of October—Rest and Re-organisation—Move to Italian Front.

Pages 193—211

THE RECORD OF THE 1ST BATTALION, 1918.

On the Montello, Italy—Raids on the Austrian Line—Training at Villafranca—On the Asiago Plateau—Raid at Vaister—Summer at Mount Serona Camp—The Piave River—The Crossing at Grave di Papadopoli—Capture of Villages of Borgo Belussi and Vazzola—Crossing the Monticano—Capture of Cimetta—Further Advance to Rauscedo—The Armistice, November 11th, 1918—Home Again, 1919—On Foreign Service, Burmah.

Pages 212—237

THE RECORD OF THE 2ND BATTALION, 1914.
(THE OLD 80TH.)

Major Dent's Diary—War Declared—Landing in France—The Advance to Mons—The Historic Retreat from Mons—Saving the Guns—Battles of the Marne and the Aisne—Hurried Move to Ypres—First Battle of Ypres—"How the South Staffordshires Held the Trench"—Defence of Givenchy—Christmas in the Trenches.

Pages 239—290

THE RECORD OF THE 2ND BATTALION, 1915.

Trench Warfare—At Givenchy—Raid on German Trench—Battle of Neuve Chapelle—Holding Attack on Givenchy—Trench Warfare—Battle of Aubers Ridge—Richbourg l'Avoue—Battle of Festubert—Trench Warfare—Battle of Loos—Captain A. F. G. Kilby wins Victoria Cross—Trench Warfare—Inspection by H.M. King George V.—In Front of Cambrin—Gibson's Crater—Christmas in Billets.

Pages 291—316

THE RECORD OF THE 2ND BATTALION, 1916.

In Flanders—Sports—La Bassée Area—In the Lens Area—Trench Warfare—Raiding the German Trenches—Vimy Ridge—The Somme Battles—Attack on Guillemont—With the Fifth Corps—Trench Warfare—Battle of the Ancre—Resting and Training.

Pages 317—337

Digitized by Google

THE RECORD OF THE 2ND BATTALION, 1917.

Trench Warfare—Fighting on the Upper Ancre—The German Retreat —Advance to Bapaume—Battle of Arras—Attack on Oppy-Arleux—In Reserve—Third Battle of Ypres—Givenchy Sector—Battle of Cambrai— The Epic of Bourlon Wood.

Pages 338—359

THE RECORD OF THE 2ND BATTALION, 1918.

Trench Warfare—Salvage Work—In Divisional Reserve—The Great German Attack—Battle of Haplincourt—Heroic Stand of "A" Company —Colonel Alban Wounded—The Black Month—Trench Warfare—Attack and Capture of Ervillers—Battle of Albert—Second Battle of Arras— Battle of Havrincourt—Capture of Orival Wood—Battle of Cambrai —Back Again to Mons—The Armistice—The March into Germany— Home Again.

Pages 360—400

THE 1ST KING'S OWN REGIMENT OF STAFFORDSHIRE MILITIA.

3rd AND 4th BATTALIONS - - - - Pages 401—413
5th AND 6th BATTALIONS (T.F.) - - - „ 414—419
7th (SERVICE) BATTALION - - - - - „ 419—421
8th „ „ - - - - - „ 422—423
9th „ „ (PIONEERS) - Page 423
OTHER BATTALIONS - - - - - „ 424

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX I.—SUCCESSION OF COMMANDING OFFICERS— 38th Regiment - Pages 427—432
„ II.— „ „ „ 80th „ - „ 433—437
„ III.—THE UNIFORM OF THE REGIMENT - „ 438—453
(By Lionel E. Buckell.)
„ IV.—HONOURS AWARDED, 1914-1918—
1st Battalion - - - „ 454—459
2nd Battalion - - - „ 460—466

ADDENDA - - - - Pages 467—468
LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS - - „ 469—472
INDEX - - - - „ 473—483

Digitized by Google

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAPS.

PLATE NO.

Frontispiece—PRIVATE OF THE 38TH REGIMENT, 1742 *To face title page*
(From Coloured Sketch, in possession of Lieut.-Colonel Swynfen J. Jervis.)

1. COLONEL LUKE LILLINGSTON - *To face page* 5
(Photograph from Monument in Ferriby Church, Yorks., by J. P. Jones.)

2. MARQUIS OF ANGLESEY - - - - 16
(From an old engraving.)

3. MONUMENT TO 80TH REGIMENT, LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL - - - - - 65
(Photograph by J. P. Jones.)

4. 38TH IN EGYPT. NILE CAMPAIGN, 1882-1884 - 80
(By permission of *The Graphic*.)

5. 38TH MEMORIAL WINDOW, LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL 84
(Photograph by J. P. Jones.)

6. LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR CHARLES TUCKER, G.C.B., G.C.V.O. - - - - - - 93
(By permission of O. C. Association.)

7. CAMP OF THE 80TH REGIMENT, ZULU WAR, 1878-1879 - - - - - 102
(By permission of *The Illustrated London News*.)

8. REGIMENTAL GONG, SHOWING STATIONS OF 80TH REGIMENT - - - - - 106
(Photograph by J. P. Jones.)

9. BRIG.-GENERAL R. M. OVENS, C.M.G. - - 129
(Photograph by Swaine, London.)

10. CAPTAIN J. F. VALLENTIN, V.C. - - - }
(Photo. *Country Life*.) } 145
CAPTAIN A. F. G. KILBY, V.C. - - - }

11. OFFICERS, 1ST BATTALION, CORBIE, BRAY-SUR-SOMME, MAY, 1916 - - - - 177

12. IN DELVILLE WOOD - - - - 192
(Official photograph.)

13. BRIDGE OVER RIVER PIAVE, ITALY - - - 224
(Italian Official photograph.)

14. OFFICERS, 2ND BATTALION, ALDERSHOT, 1914 - 240
(Gale and Polden, Aldershot.)

15. BRIG.-GENERAL C. S. DAVIDSON, C.B. - - 272

16. 2ND BATTALION, LANGENFELDT - - - 398
(Photos. by Lieut. S. H. Houle.)

Digitized by Google

List of Illustrations and Maps—*continued.*

PLATE NO.

17. Badges of the Regiment - - - - 440
(Photos. by J. P. Jones.)

18. Badges of the Regiment - - - - 444
(Photos. by J. P. Jones.)

19. War Memorial, Whittington Barracks - 468
(By permission of *The Staffordshire Advertiser.*)

MAPS.

1. The Hohenzollern Redoubt - - - 160
2. The Advance from The Piave - - - 208
3. The Retreat from Mons - - - 256
4. The Battle of Gheluvelt - - - 288
5. Battle of Loos, The Railway Triangle - 304
6. The Battles of The Somme, 1916 - - 336

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL MILITARY HISTORY.

Trained Bands—British Army Origin—County Militia—South Staffordshire Regiment: Its Constitution: How it was Formed.

THE story of the British Army dates from Saxon times, when it was compulsory for every man to serve in the "Fyrd" or Militia. As this condition applied to all men who were able to bear arms, the Army thus created formed the Military force of the whole nation for service under the King at home. From this citizen service, rendered in obligation to an early law, has been gradually developed the British Army.

Thus the Militia was the first organised Military Force arranged in groups of Counties, sometimes called "Trained Bands"; they were usually raised by the large landowners in the Counties under what was known as the "Feudal Levy," and the Commanders of the various Corps were responsible for their training, provision of arms and accoutrements, and the appointment of their leaders.

As no provision was made for a standing Army, these irregular troops were disbanded as soon as the need for their services had passed. They were purely a Territorial Force, of which each County had to provide a certain quota, and were in no sense a "Regular Army"; they were only liable to be called up in certain eventualities, such as riot and disturbance of the realm, and were disbanded as soon as their services could be dispensed with.

Charles I. desired to establish a standing Army, and both Royalist and Parliamentary Forces in the Civil War partook of this character. Cromwell's Forces were practically, though not legally, the first of England's standing Army; they were disbanded at the Restoration.

When Charles II. came into his own, he quickly realised the need for a standing Army, and, as Parliament would not vote a penny for this purpose, and the King could not safely demand funds for it, he attained his object by enrolling in his service General Monk's Regiment, the Coldstream, and another Regiment brought from Dunkirk. These, with two regiments of horse, were called "King's Guards," and in 1662 the little Army mustered about 5,000 men.

Digitized by Google

This led to the abolition of the old "Feudal Levy," but the organisation of what were called the old "Trained Bands" in each County still remained.

Under Statute of 1662 the command of these "Trained Bands," the disposal of their arms, and the appointment of their officers was settled, and for the first time in the history of the British Army they are called "Militia."

The Militia.

The earliest recorded date of the Staffordshire Militia is 1648, when it consisted of a Regiment of Foot and two troops of horse, under the command of Col. John Bowyer of Knypersley. Although as a regiment it was, until the latter part of the 18th century, frequently in abeyance, the old Staffordshire Militia has existed from 1648 to the present time. In 1689, after various conflicts with Parliament, there was passed the "Bill of Rights," by which Act of William III. the troops already serving became the standing Army of England, sanctioned by Parliament.

The condition of the Militia during the seventeenth and the greater part of the eighteenth century can only be described as disgraceful. Under the early Stuart's they were hardly called out once in five years for drill. The march of the young Pretender, with a few thousand troops into the heart of England, proved the utter incompetence of the Constitutional Force, and in 1757 when England was fighting in all parts of the globe, the great Chatham introduced a new Militia Bill, remodelling the entire force,(1) but Staffordshire, instead of balloting for its quota, paid a fine.

Twenty years later, in 1793, "owing to warlike preparations in France becoming every day more considerable," the Militia of the kingdom was embodied, and Staffordshire furnished 600 men ready to "march to such posts as shall be judged proper."

Their Colonel was Lord Paget, their Lieut.-Colonel Sir John Wrottesley, and the other commissioned officers were a Major, six Captains, nine Lieutenants, an Ensign, and an Adjutant.(2)

In order to establish the seniority of the various regiments for that year, lots were drawn at the St. Alban's Tavern in London by the Lord's Lieutenant or their deputies, and by this method Staffordshire came fortieth on the list.(3)

The South Staffordshire Regiment.

The South Staffordshire Regiment was formed in 1705, and called Colonel Luke Lillingston's Regiment after its founder. It subsequently became the 38th of Foot, now the 1st Battalion

(1) 30 Geo. II. cap. 25.
(2) V. C. Hist. Staffs. Vol. I. p. 269.
(3) *Ibid.*

Digitized by Google

South Staffordshire Regiment. The 2nd Battalion was raised in 1793, by Lord Henry W. Paget, from the Staffordshire Militia, and was numbered the 80th Regiment of Foot (Staffordshire Volunteers).

The 3rd and 4th Battalions of the Regiment were originally the 1st King's Own Staffordshire Militia, which was formed in 1648, during the time of the great national troubles under Charles I. It remained one Regiment up to 1874, when it was divided into two Battalions, owing to the large number of men of which it was then composed.

In 1881 a General Order was issued by the War Office as follows:—"The Infantry of the Line and of the Militia will in future be organised in Territorial Regiments, each of four Battalions for England, Scotland, and Wales, and five Battalions for Ireland. The 1st and 2nd being Line Battalions and the remainder Militia. These Regiments will wear a Territorial designation corresponding to the localities with which they are connected."(1)

By a subsequent Order, the 38th and 80th Regiments became the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the South Staffordshire Regiment, and the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 1st King's Own Staffordshire Militia were linked to these Line Battalions as the 3rd and 4th Battalions of the Regiment. They remained Militia until Lord Haldane's Army Re-organisation Scheme of 1905-6, when they were constituted "Special Reserve" Battalions to the Line, by which designation they were known and from which reinforcements were continually sent to the Regular Units during the Great War.

In peace time, the "Special Reserve" Battalions only came out for a month's training, and were then disembodied, and the permanent staff returned to the Depôt, Lichfield. In peace time also, the "Home" Battalion finds all reinforcements for its "Linked" Battalion serving abroad.

In 1859, the Government at last recognised the voluntary spirit of the nation by authorising the formation of the Volunteer Rifle Corps, and South Staffordshire, by the following year, had five Battalions of Volunteers, fully equipped with uniform, rifles and side-arms. These five Battalions were originally styled "Administrative" Battalions, and had their Headquarters in various towns in South Staffordshire. In the year 1880, they were converted into "Consolidated" Battalions, and re-numbered. This state continued until 1883, when the localisation of the Volunteer Battalions was carried out, and they were allocated to the

(1) Army List, 1881.

Digitized by Google

Line Regiment as "Volunteer Battalions of the South Staffordshire Regiment." This arrangement continued until the disbanding of the old Volunteer Forces on the night of March 31st, 1908, when they were replaced by the present Territorial Battalions.

The Regiment's Formation.

On the outbreak of the Great War, 4th August, 1914, the South Staffordshire Regiment was constituted as follows:—

1st Battalion - - - - the Old 38th Foot.
2nd Battalion - - - - the Old 80th Foot.
3rd Battalion - 1st King's Own Staffordshire Militia.
4th Battalion - 1st King's Own Staffordshire Militia.
5th Battalion - the Old 1st & 2nd Volunteer Battalions.
6th Battalion - - the Old 3rd Volunteer Battalion.

Consisting of 2 Line Battalions, 2 Special Reserve and 2 Territorial.

In this great crisis of the world's history, Staffordshire has again shown that splendid patriotism and loyalty which, in times past, have added honour to its people and distinction to the Regiment.

Seven additional Service Battalions and four Territorial Force Battalions were raised and maintained throughout the War.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



Photo. *J. P. Jones.*

COLONEL LUKE LILLINGSTON.
(Raised the 38th Regiment of Foot.)

PLATE 1. *To face p. 5*

UNIV. OF ...

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER II.

THE RAISING OF THE REGIMENT.

West Indies—Guadaloupe—Martinique.
1705—1765.

OF all the English Line Regiments, there are few holding a more brilliant record than the 1st South Staffords (38th). It is one of the oldest Regiments in the British Army, and has been from its formation associated with the County of Stafford, for it was raised at Lichfield, and throughout all the changes introduced by various Secretarys of War it has remained a Staffordshire Regiment. It has fought in nearly every part of the globe.

Its beginning dates from March 25th, 1705, when Colonel Luke Lillingston raised a new Regiment of Foot at Lichfield, Co. Stafford.

Its Commander had already seen service abroad, for he was for some years in command of an English Regiment in the service of Holland, and accompanied the Prince of Orange (William III.) to England in November, 1688. The same year he appears as a Captain in Col. Belayse's Regiment. This Regiment, which consisted of 12 Companies in November, 1668, now ranks as the 6th, or Royal Warwickshire Regiment. But previous to this date he had been an Ensign in Earl Musgrave's Regiment, of which same Regiment his father had been Lt.-Col.; his commission as Ensign is dated 25th June, 1673. When this Regiment was disbanded, Lillingston was given the command of Sir John Foulkes' Regiment, on the death of that officer. His commission as Lt.-Col. was issued from The Hague, 1st October, 1692. This Regiment was then serving in the West Indies, with an Expedition under Sir Francis Wheeler, and on its return to England in 1692 consisted of 13 Companies, 60 men each. It was broken at Plymouth, by order of Lord Cutts, and a new Corps formed.

The new Regiment was formed on the 14th January, 1695, and was composed of 600 men of Col. Lillingston's former Corps and 600 men from three other Regiments. It was destined for service in Jamaica, and among the officers

Digitized by Google

serving was his brother, Captain Jervase Lillingston, who had exchanged on 8th March, 1694, from Sir Robert Peyton's Regiment (now the Lancashire Fusiliers). Jervase got his majority almost on joining, and embarked with the Regiment for Jamaica, sailing from Plymouth 22nd January, 1695. This newly-formed Regiment, under Colonel Lillingston, did good service in capturing the French Settlement on the Island of St. Domingo, but Lillingston had great difficulties with the Commodore of the Naval Squadron attached to the Expedition. These Expeditions to the West Indies apparently were designed not only to interrupt and impoverish the French, against whom the British were at war, but to fill the pockets of the Commanders who went out with them; for all prizes captured at sea, and all the booty captured on land, was divided up between the Crown and the Forces employed. This system made it easy for an unscrupulous Commander to enrich himself at the public expense. Colonel Lillingston was unfortunate in having as his associate in this venture a Commander who was obviously determined to make all he could, irrespective of the Crown's rights, or other people's, and this led to constant bickering between them. Moreover, the jealousy between the senior Service and the Army was very acute, and Commodore Wilmot, instead of supporting Lillingston, played for himself.

Colonel Luke Lillington's Regiment.

After many delays, caused by the Commodore's unwillingness to provide the necessary guns for attacking the French fortress, Lillingston—with the Spanish troops acting with him—captured the fort and reduced the settlement. Constant exposure to the climate decimated the Regiment to such an extent that it was of no value as a fighting unit; Lillingston himself, broken in health, and with his reputation dimmed by the aspersions cast upon it by Commodore Wilmot, returned to England in March, 1696. Arriving in London, he waited on the King, and laid such facts before His Majesty that he was exonerated from all blame, and received a grant of £200 per annum while waiting for fresh employment.(1) This Regiment died a natural death after the Peace of Ryswick, when it had dwindled to very small proportions. Colonel Lillingston's commission for this command is dated 23rd December, 1694, and in 1695 he was appointed Brigadier-General in the West Indies.

After the return and disbanding of the Regiment, he was out of employment, but there was need for more fighting men on the Continent, where the great Duke of Marlborough was waging a successful war in Flanders. Parliament, encouraged by Marlborough's success, "cheerfully voted five millions for

(1) Expedition to West Indies. Colonel Luke Lillingston. 1704.

Digitized by Google

the service of the war, and six new Battalions were raised, namely, Wynne's, Bretton's, Lepell's, Soames', Sir Charles Hotham's and Lillingston's: the last of which, alone, has survived to our day with the rank of the 38th of the Line."(1) This was Colonel Lillingston's opportunity, and he raised his new Regiment at Lichfield in 1705.(2)

The traditional date of the raising of the Regiment is given by some Military writers as 13th February, 1702, but this statement has no foundation in fact. It is a treasured tradition in Lichfield that this date is correct, and that the Regiment's Headquarters were at the King's Head, in Bird Street, not far from the Cathedral. Colonel Lillingston was certainly entitled to have a Regiment given to him in 1702, as he had previously been employed in command of two successive Regiments in the West Indies. But Lillingston's Foot Regiment raised on 25th March, 1705, was not a re-formed Regiment at all, but a new one, and is the 38th Foot, now the 1st Battalion, South Staffordshire Regiment. In the Home Office Military Entry Books, 1702—1706 (now at the Public Record Office), there appears a list of "Commissions for a Regiment of Foot to be forthwith raised for our Service, Commanded by Colonel Lillingston, dated at St. James', 25th March (New Year's Day, old style), 1705."

The Raising of the 38th, March 25th, 1705.

Dalton, in his "Records of Commissions," goes very fully into the matter, and his date is confirmed by Millar, and the Military Entry Books, and must be accepted as the correct date of the raising of the Regiment.

The following is a List of the Officers of the Regiment. All their Commissions are dated at St. James's, London, 25th March, 1705:—

"Colonel, Luke Lillingston,
Lt.-Col., James Jones,
Major, Charles Floyer,

Captains.

Booth Hereford,	Richard Goddard,
Charles Knowles,	Laurence St. Loo,
Cole Mordaunt,	William Aldey,
Bernard Whaley,	Thomas Newell.
John Griffith,	

(1) Fortescue, Hist. Brit. Army. Vol. I. p. 450.

(2) The Order authorising the formation of these six new Battalions is in each case in the same form:—"These are to authorise you by beat of drum or otherwise to Raise Volunteers for a Regiment of Foot under your command for our service," etc., etc.

"To our trusty and well-beloved Luke Lillingston, Colonel of one of our Regiments of Foot, and to the Officers," etc. (The Miscellany Book. Guards and Garrisons, 1704 to 1712. Public Record Office.)

Digitized by Google

Lieutenants.

Benjamin Jerrens,
Philip Welsh,
Francis Clarke,
Matthew Perkins,
Thomas Atkinson,
James Ayking,
Samuel Smyth,
Thomas Gawdt,
George Coats,
Joseph Rookley,
John Pitt.

Grenadier Company, Robert Hatton, 1st Lieut.
Marmaduke Alsop, 2nd Lieut.

Chaplain, William Thorold.

Ensigns.

Personnel of the Officers.

Richard Lambert,
Ezekiel Everest,
Murdock Mackenzie,
John Prideaux,
George Hetherington,
Lesly Blake,
Jervis Grills,
Joseph Etheridge,
James Cawley,
Stephen Curtis,
William Lambert.

Supplementary Commissions.

Francis Lewis to be Adjutant,
Thomas Pallen to be Quarter-Master,
Thomas Ridley to be Surgeon.

Stephen Curtis to be Lieutenant to Captain Booth Hereford *vice* Lieutenant Matthew Perkins, who refused.

Jarvace Bowden to be Ensign to Captain John Griffith.

John Macqueen to be Ensign to Colonel Luke Lillingston's own Company.

William Arnold to be Lieutenant to Captain John Griffith."(1)

This, then, is the *primordia* of the South Staffordshire Regiment. Their founder and Colonel was a Yorkshireman, a native of Ferriby, East Yorkshire.

When Colonel Lillingston's Regiment was first raised in 1705, it was sent to Ireland, and in 1707 embarked for the West Indies, where the Regiment was stationed for fifty-eight years. Lillingston did not go out with his men, and was succeeded in the command by Lt.-Col. James Jones in June, 1708. Colonel Lillingston died in April, 1713, and was buried at North Ferriby Church, East Yorks., where there is a monument to his memory.

---

(1) English Army Lists and Commissions Registers, 1661—1714. Vol. V. p. 182.

Digitized by Google

Colonel J. Jones, who succeeded him in the command of the Regiment, was gazetted Brev.-Col. on 26th November, 1706, and full Colonel 2nd June, 1708. In 1711 he disposed of the Colonelcy to Lt.-Col. Francis Alexander, and died the same year.

The Regiment had no part in the glories of Marlborough's campaign on the Continent, but seems to have been destined for foreign service from its birth, for the long records of its various campaigns show that its periods of service at home were extremely rare. For the most part of their fifty-eight years' service in the West Indies they were stationed on the island of Antigua, and while there won their first Battle Honours.

Fifty-eight Years in West Indies.

British settlements had been made as early as 1623, at St. Christopher's, commonly called St. Kitts, an island forming part of the West Indian Archipelago, and for upwards of two centuries British, French, and Spaniards were continually fighting for possession of one or the other of these islands, so that the West Indies was a good training ground for our soldiers.

For some years after their arrival in the West Indies, the Regiment was, in 1745, "like the rest of the British Forces, at home and abroad, in a miserably neglected condition, forgotten and starved by the authorities. The Regiment at St. Kitts, where they were stationed, had not forty per cent. of the men ready and fit for service: their clothing was in rags, they had neither hats, shoes, cartridge boxes or swords."(1) It is interesting to note how the improvement of firearms was at a standstill during the 18th century, for the muskets used by the 38th in the capture of Guadaloupe were mostly the original ones they had brought with them from England in 1707.

In 1751 the Regiment was given the designation of the "38th Foot Regiment," and in 1759 a detachment was sent from Antigua to assist in the capture of Guadaloupe, then in the possession of the French.

The 38th Foot.

Major Robert Melville, who commanded the detachment of the 38th, began his Military career in the 25th Regiment (K.O.S.B.), and after serving with it in the Netherlands from 1744—1748 returned to England and was engaged in the suppression of the Scotch revolt, in the attempt to place the Young Pretender, Prince Charles Edward Stuart, on the English throne. In the Spring of 1756 he was promoted Major of the 38th Regiment, then at Antigua, in the Leeward Islands, where it had been for some years.(2)

(1) Fortescue, Hist. Brit. Army. Vol. III. p. 565.
(2) Memoir. General Robert Melville.

Digitized by Google

When it was decided to attempt the conquest of the French island of Guadaloupe, Major Melville, who was in command of the 38th, at his own request, was authorised to proceed with 200 men of the 38th, and join the Expedition, which comprised about 5,000 men from six English Regiments. Major Melville commanded the Light Infantry Corps, formed of units from the various Regiments, and during a surprise attack on an enemy post was blown up by an explosion, but soon recovered. After the death of General Hopson, the attack was transferred to the island of Grand Terre, and Major Melville, with the 38th, was posted on a ship at the mouth of the River Salle, to cut off the enemy's communications between the two islands. From this duty he was despatched by General Barrington to take over the defence of Fort Royal. Having reconnoitred the enemy's position, he ordered a strong sally to be made from the Fort. The attack was so successful that the enemy's battery was destroyed and the guns spiked, the British loss being only 12 killed and wounded.(1)

Capture of Guadaloupe, 1759.

On the 1st May, 1759, the island was surrendered to the British, and the 38th returned to its own quarters in the Leeward Islands. Major Melville was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Guadaloupe and its dependencies, and was appointed Lieut.-Col. of the 63rd Regiment (The Manchesters). The complete reduction of the French Settlements in North America (now Canada) enabled the British Ministry to draw a very considerable Military force to the West Indies, where it was resolved to make a powerful attack upon such islands as still belonged to France. For this purpose eleven Battalions of Infantry were assembled in the month of August, 1761, on Staten Island, near New York.

38th in the Leeward Islands.

General Monckton was in command of the Army, and Lord Rollo had orders to collect such troops as could be spared from the different garrisons in the West Indies and join the Forces at Barbadoes, at which island Rear Admiral Rodney arrived on the 22nd November, 1761. The concentration of the troops at Barbadoes was completed by the end of December, and the Expedition sailed from Carlisle Bay on January 5th, 1762, arriving at Martinique on the 7th.

Four Companies of the 38th Regiment, under the command of Lieut.-Col. R. Melville, were sent from Antigua, and joined the troops at Barbadoes. They took part in the various attempts at landing on the island, and relieved a force of

(1) The 38th had the following casualties at the taking of Guadaloupe—28th March, 1759:—
Killed: Lieutenant T. Plaistow. Died: Captain J. Stuart.
Wounded: Major R. Melville, Ensign Dunbar, Surgeon Nicholson.

Digitized by Google

Marines, who had secured a landing at Grand Ance. General Haviland ordered Lieut.-Col. R. Melville, with his detachment of the 38th, to secure the post. This was successfully accomplished. While stationed on the high ground opposite the Pigeon Fort, the Light Infantry were attacked in the dead of night by three Companies of French Grenadiers, some freebooters, negroes and mulattoes, which the enemy had sent over from Fort Royal, but they were so warmly received that they made a hasty retreat, leaving some dead on the ground and losing a Sergeant and some Grenadiers as prisoners. The British had no loss.

Early on the morning of the 15th a bombardment by the ships silenced the enemy's batteries, and the troops were able to make good their landing without loss in the Cas des Navieres Bay. When the artillery had been landed and placed in position, General Monckton ordered a general attack on Fort Royal. This lasted from January 24th until February 3rd, when the garrison decided to surrender, marching out on the 5th, having laid down their arms. General Monckton then proceeded to the reduction of the other forts on the island, but on the 12th February two French deputies arrived offering terms of capitulation of the whole island, on behalf of M. de la Touche, the Governor-General. They returned with the British terms, and on the 14th February the capitulation was signed; on the 16th, General Monckton took possession of the town of St. Pierre, and all the Military works on the island.(1)

Capture of Martinijue, 1762.

The capture of these two islands gave the 38th their first Battle Honours, viz.:—

GUADALOUPE, 1759. MARTINIQUE, 1762.

but it was nearly a century and a half later before they could place these honours on their Colours, for in November, 1909, an Army Order was issued giving the King's permission for certain Regiments to bear the Honours, Guadaloupe, 1759; Martinique, 1762. Among these were the South Staffords, who at last received recognition of their services at the capture of these two islands.(2)

Battle Honours.

Their long period of service abroad in the West Indies came to an end in 1765, and the 38th had a brief spell of service at home, partly in Ireland and partly at Lichfield. What hopes they may have cherished of a long period of home service were soon dispelled by the trouble with the American Colonies, and when the rupture came between England and the Colonists, the 38th were sent post haste with other troops to help to quell the rebellion.

(1) Battle Records. MSS. *ex.* inform. Lieut.-Colonel M. B. Savage, C.B.E., D.S.O.

(2) Army Order 295, 11th December, 1909.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER III.

38th at Bunker's Hill—Raising the 80th Foot—In Flanders—Retreat to Bremen—Egypt, the Desert March—Shipwreck—India—38th at Cape of Good Hope—South America—Attack on Buenos Ayres—Capture of Monte Video—Death of Colonel Vassall—Capture of Buenos Ayres—Gallant Work of 38th Foot.
1775—1816.

IN 1768 the friction existing between the Home Government and the American Colonies became more acute, and where abler diplomacy and tact might have arranged matters satisfactorily to both parties, the obstinacy of George III. and his subservient Minister, Lord North, only widened the breach.

The Boston Tea Riots of 1773 brought matters to a climax. Additional British troops, to the number of 10,000, were sent out from England, under General Howe, and a landing was made at Boston. The 38th were one of the first Regiments to be despatched, and formed part of the right wing, under Brig.-General R. Pigot.

When the troops landed at Boston, they found the position commanding the town occupied by the American Militia, who had entrenched themselves on Breed's Hill, barring the way inland.

Bunker's Hill, 1775.

The Battle of Bunker's Hill took place on 17th June, 1775. It was really fought on Breed's Hill, a height commanding Boston from the North, and resulted in a victory for the British. The Americans had so cleverly entrenched themselves that their position was only stormed after three attacks.

The 38th went into action in full marching order, under 300 strong, and made a frontal attack on a fortified position held by a force quite equal in strength to their own. In the first attack the 38th were in the second line in support of the 42nd Highlanders, on the right wing, under General R. Pigot, but on that attack failing they were brought up into the centre of the first line, and they held the same position at the third attempt, when, attacking with great desperation, the position was finally carried—by the bayonet. The ground was very boggy, so the men, in their heavy marching order, were only able to move at the walk, and guns could not be brought up to support them. In this action the 38th had a casualty list of 25 killed and 100 wounded, nearly half their full strength.

Digitized by Google

In recognition of his gallant conduct at Bunker's Hill, Brig.-General Sir Robert Pigot was appointed Colonel of the 38th Regiment.

Attempts to penetrate further into the mainland were unsuccessful, and in the Spring of 1776 General Howe withdrew his troops by sea to Halifax. Meanwhile, fresh reinforcements were being sent over from England, including large numbers of foreign mercenary troops from Brunswick and Hesse.

On July 4th, 1776, the American Colonists took the decisive step of declaring their independence. This Declaration of Independence established a new republic as the "United States of America." The interest in the war was now transferred to New York, and General Howe, on August 27th, 1776, effected a landing with his forces on Long Island, and, attacking Washington's army before Brooklyn Heights, defeated him and drove him through New Jersey into Pennsylvania. The 38th formed part of the third Brigade, and were in the fourth column, which was despatched by night down Haarlem Creek to the south of the American position, where they greatly distinguished themselves.

Capture of New York, 1776.

By the capture of New York on September 15th, 1776, General Howe was enabled to reorganise his forces, and on November 16th the same year he sent a column, commanded by Lord Percy, to attack Fort Washington. The 38th formed part of this column, which captured the position. They also formed part of General Sir Henry Clinton's Brigade, which occupied Rhode Island, without resistance, on December 1st, 1776. While in occupation of the Island, the 38th had a brush with the French Fleet, which had been sent from France to America to assist the rebel Colonists.

Brig.-General Sir Robert Pigot, who was in command of the 38th, in a despatch to General Clinton, dated 1st August, 1778, wrote: "The French Fleet appeared on the 29th about 11.0 a.m. To-day it has been tacking backwards and forward the whole day, and this evening are come to an anchor off Brenton's Lodge." On August 31st, Pigot wrote that when it was evident the French Fleet were coming into the harbour, he had destroyed everything likely to be of value to them, and removed all the cattle inland, but had made provision for the families on the Island. The French Fleet kept up a constant bombardment on the British batteries, but made no attempt at landing. Then Lord Howe's Fleet appeared, and the French Fleet sailed out of the harbour again, firing on the batteries, but without injuring a single man.

38th on Rhode Island.

While the 38th were serving in North America, drafts and recruits were sent from Ireland to make up deficiencies and

Digitized by Google

complete the establishment, Major Bruce, of the 38th, being appointed to superintend their embarkation and despatch from Cork.

Some of the Officers were desirous of exchanging to other Regiments, or retiring by sale of their Commissions, and this produced an Order from Lord Barrington, Secretary for War, directing "that no Officer serving in a Regiment in North America can be allowed to sell his Commission without the approbation of General Howe."(1)

Afterwards they were chiefly stationed at New York and Nova Scotia, and so missed much of the subsequent fighting.

38th on Home Service, 1784.

After the catastrophe to Lord Cornwallis and his troops, Peace was signed in January, 1783. The 38th (South Staffords) then came home, very much under strength, and under the command of Lieut.-General Sir Robert Pigot, their Colonel-in-Chief, they were inspected at Stafford on the 5th June, 1784. The Regiment numbered 238 men, of whom 151 were English, 18 Scotch, 57 Irish, and 12 Foreigners; 112 of them had served for upwards of 10 years.

Lieut.-General George Warde, who inspected them, in his "Remarks on His Majesty's 38th or First Staffordshire Regiment of Foot," says:—

"Officers. A good Corps. Salute pretty well, very attentive, and Uniform conformable to Regulations.

N.C.O.'s. Of good appearance, attentive and expert.

Men. Good, mostly veterans. Recruits good. Marched pretty well, time rather fast, Manual rather quick.

Arms. In general bad and many wanting.

General Observations. This Regiment appears to be very diligent as well in recruiting as forming their men. The system in general such as promises to lay the foundations of a very serviceable Regiment.

Signed, GEO. WARDE,
Lieut.-General."(2)

For the year 1787, the Inspecting Officer gave a good report, but noted the Regiment marched "in slow time, slower than the Regulation," but he admitted they "march remarkably well in Line and gain much ground in their movements." He testifies to the Regiment's smartness in recruiting, but deplores that 70 of the newly-enlisted had deserted, "chiefly Staffordshire men and men from Wolverhampton."

---

(1) W.O. 4/273, fol. 83, *ex.* Lieut.-Colonel Savage, C.B.E., D.S.O.
(2) W.O. 27/51. *Ibid.*

Digitized by Google

In his general observations, Major-General Osborn praises their discipline, and states that a "school is established for the children of N.C.O.'s and other ranks."(1) This is, so far as I know, the first recorded attempt to form a Military School for the education of the children of the Regiment.

The next year, 1788, the same General Officer, on inspection, gave a very satisfactory report on the condition of the Regiment, which appears to have been in excellent condition. But he reports that "the Officers represent themselves as labouring under great hardships, *not having received any arrears of pay since 1781!*"

Service in Ireland.

The Regiment was then under orders for Ireland, and evidently the Irish pension on discharge was lower than that prevailing in England, for the Inspection Officer remarks that if the pension was on the same scale, "many soldiers would be kept in the ranks of the Regiment going there (Ireland) which the Reviewing General can not at present object to being discharged as a superior reward for doing service."(2)

In 1794, the flank Companies of the 38th assisted at another capture of Martinique and Guadaloupe. These detachments were made up of the Grenadier Company and formed part of the 2nd Grenadier Battalion, which was a composite one, under Colonel Campbell; and a Light Company of the 38th formed part of the 2nd Light Infantry Battalions, under Colonel Meyers; other reinforcements were also despatched from the depôt in Ireland.(3)

In 1795, the Negro Insurrection in the Windward Islands found them as part of the 4th Brigade, under Sir Ralph Abercrombie, who suppressed the rising and restored order.

The First Staffordshire Regiment.

While the Regiment was fighting abroad, it had received its title of the "First Staffordshire Regiment," for in 1783 there was passed an "Act providing for the maintenance of the Army by a Secretary of War, instead of by contract with the Colonels of the Regiments." Under this Act, the old 38th assumed "by Order" the title of the "First Staffordshire Regiment."(4)

RAISING OF THE 80TH REGIMENT.

A second Staffordshire Regiment was raised at the beginning of the French Revolution in 1793, by a "Letter of

---

(1) W.O. 27/59. } *Ex.* Lieut.-Colonel M. B. Savage, C.B.E., D.S.O.
(2) W.O. 27/61. }
(3) Fortescue, Hist. Brit. Army. Vol. IV. p. 354.
(4) V. C. Hist. Staffs.

Digitized by Google

Service" addressed to Lord Henry William Paget, dated 12th September, 1793, and numbered the 80th Regiment of Foot. The depôt for its formation was fixed at Chatham, and its first establishment was 700 rank and file.

The Regiment was almost entirely composed of volunteers from the Staffordshire Militia, commanded by the Earl of Uxbridge, Lord Paget's father. They were named the "Staffordshire Volunteers," and so remained until they became the 2nd Battalion of the South Staffordshire Regiment.

"Three Regiments have successively ranked as the 80th of the British Line. The first was the old 80th "Light Armed" Foot of 1758—64, raised for service in America by Colonel (afterwards General) the Hon. Thomas Gage, under a Warrant dated 5th May, 1758. It consisted of five Companies of extra strength, the men of which had a lighter equipment than usual, and had the barrels of their firelocks cut short like carbines, and browned."

"The Regiment was broken up in Canada some time after the Peace of 1763.

"Next came the 80th (Royal Edinburgh Volunteers) Regiment of Foot of 1778—84; one of the "Loyalty" Regiments, the cost of raising which was defrayed by public subscription during the American War of Independence. It was raised at Edinburgh, did good service in America under Lord Cornwallis, and was disbanded after the Peace of 1783."

"The third is the present 2nd Battalion, South Staffordshire Regiment."(1)

In three months the 80th had completed their establishment, and the first Field Officers gazetted were Lieut.-Col. Lord Henry William Paget, Major Forbes Champagni, and Major Josiah Champagni. "The Commission he (Lord Paget) received to command it was the first that he ever held in the Army; and the Regiment took, and still keeps, the No. of the 80th."(2) Subsequently Lord Paget exchanged into a Hussar Regiment, and was a brilliant leader of a Cavalry Brigade during the Peninsula War, and again at Waterloo. He is perhaps better known to history as the first Marquis of Anglesey, a title conferred upon him on 23rd June, 1815.

In those days newly-formed Regiments did not have the time for training they do now, and in less than three months after their embodiment the new 80th Regiment were sent to Guernsey, then threatened by invasion from France. In

(1) Records and Badges, British Army, 1900.
(2) Fortescue, Hist. Brit. Army. Vol. IV. p. 209.

Digitized by Google



LORD H. W. PAGET, 1st MARQUIS OF ANGLESEY.
(Raised the 80th Regiment of Foot.)

PLATE 2.

To face p. 16

UNIV OF MICH

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

March, 1794, the establishment of the Regiment was increased to one thousand of all ranks, and on the 3rd September it embarked in transports for the Continent. Contrary winds detained them in the Downs for two weeks, so that they did not arrive at Flushing until the end of the month. **80th in Flanders.**

Soon after arriving at Flushing, it formed part of the Army of the Duke of York, and was in the 6th Brigade, commanded by Major-General Lord Cathcart. During this inglorious campaign the 80th suffered much from the unhealthiness of the climate and the severe winter of 1794—95, being ill-provided with warm clothing. After a few weeks' stay at Flushing, it was ordered to proceed up the Scheldt to Dort, where, on the advance to Bommel, it was compelled to leave 300 invalided men behind. In this attack on the French, on December 31st, 1794, Ensign John Harvey, who had recently joined the 80th, carried the Colours of the Regiment, which was engaged for the first time on this occasion, and particularly distinguished itself; the Colours which this Officer carried were the first to be placed on the dike at Bommel. **Attack on Bommel.**

When at Bommel, two hundred men were detached to the outposts at Rossum, where they were employed under Sir Ralph Abercrombie in the recapture of Fort St. Andrie. The 80th then joined the headquarters of the Duke of York at Winneguinn, then invested by the French Army under General Pichegin, where they remained until its final evacuation by the British on the 6th November, 1794, who crossed the River Waal by a bridge of boats. The Regiment bivouaced on the right bank of the river, where it remained suffering much from the severity of the weather. The position was considered secure from attack by the French, who made repeated attempts to effect a crossing, but were everywhere repelled. But the weather was helping the French, for so intense was the cold that the river soon froze over, and the British position became untenable; for the French were in great force, with powerful artillery, and were able to cross the frozen river.

Then began the disastrous retreat to Bremen, and the 80th suffered terribly, many of the sick were frozen to death in the ambulance waggons, while numbers lost their limbs from frost bite. The casualties of the 80th for this period of service amounted to no fewer than 228 killed and died from disease, while 210 were discharged as unfit for further service. This casualty list was the result of carelessness of the War Office in not providing the requisite clothing for the men. **The Retreat to Bremen.**

Nothing brings this out so terribly as a letter sent from Flanders on Christmas Eve, 1794: "The 38th, 40th, and 55th

Digitized by Google

Regiments are almost naked, many of their coats hanging together in pieces, while the 33rd, 59th, 63rd are very well clothed, as likewise are most of the young Regiments, except the 89th, which are very badly off. A great number of recruits have joined the Regiments who never had any but the slop clothing which they received when they were raised. Most of these recruits are in the most wretched state imaginable. Hundreds of them have only linen trousers, without stockings or drawers, and only thin slop jackets without waistcoats. Flannel waistcoats and drawers would be of infinite utility, as would, above all, good comfortable greatcoats; indeed, it seems hardly possible that the men can stand the severity of their duty without them. The 14th, 37th, and 53rd, and part of the Guards, have these articles; they received them from the subscription raised in London last year. What remains of them is, however, inconsiderable and mostly worn out. It does not seem practicable that the soldier can provide himself with a greatcoat. If the necessity of it is felt, Government must give it to him; the expense will be great, but it will be more than repaid by the lives which will be saved by the measure."

Winter Privations, 1794.

Never was a campaign where British troops, scraped together anyhow and anywhere, were worse treated; never was a campaign where they showed themselves better material.

While part of the 38th were fighting in America, other Companies of the Regiment were fighting against France with their comrades of the 80th. These Companies of the 38th, and a detachment of the 55th Regiment, were despatched from Bristol, but as they were three weeks on their journey, they reached Flanders too late to take part in the attempt to relieve Menin and Courtraix.(1)

38th in Flanders.

They were placed in the 3rd Brigade, commanded by Major-General Alex. Stewart, and after the loss of Ypres, it was decided to cover Ostend, and the 38th and 55th Regiments, with the 8th Light Dragoons, were sent there,(2) joining the garrison at Ostend 14th June, 1794.

Finally came the disastrous retreat to Bremen in the winter, when all ranks underwent terrible hardships. But in spite of all the difficulties they endured, this was a campaign in which our troops were never defeated; one accomplishment they did learn in Flanders, "to swear terribly!"

---

(1) Fortescue, Hist. Brit. Army. Vol. IV. p. 246.
(2) *Ibid.* Vol. IV. p. 379.

Digitized by Google

In April, 1795 the Army was ordered back to England, and the 80th embarked at Bremerlike, on the Weser, on the 18th April, arriving at Portsmouth on May 9th. After refitting and making up the strength of the Regiment to 700, they, on the 19th August, 1795, along with other Regiments, embarked at Southampton on a secret expedition, under the command of Major-General Sir N. E. Doyle, for the coast of France. They anchored in Quiberon Bay on the 12th September, and on the 30th the 12th and 80th Regiments were despatched to Isle de Dieu, off the coast of La Vendee. In the hope of lending aid to the French loyalists in some of their abortive attempts on the French coast, a landing was effected on the 1st October, and the troops remained at Isle de Dieu until early in December, when the entire force embarked in ships of war. The 80th remained on board for five weeks, cruising with the squadron, and finally disembarked at Southampton on the 6th January, 1796. Their casualties during the past year amounted to 461, of whom 248 died in hospital or were killed in action, while the remainder were discharged as unfit for further service.

80th at Isle de Dieu.

From Southampton the Regiment marched to Lyndhurst, in the New Forest, where it refitted and completed its strength, and on the 8th April the same year the 80th proceeded to Portsmouth, under the command of Lieut.-Col. Josiah Champagni, and embarked for the Cape of Good Hope, arriving in Simon's Bay on the 26th July. During their stay at the Cape, a Dutch squadron of seven ships of war, with reinforcements of troops for the Dutch Settlements in the East Indies, put into Saldanha Bay. As soon as this came to the notice of the Governor-General, Sir James Craig, he at once despatched information to Sir George Keith, commanding the British squadron then at sea, and sent a body of troops to Saldanha Bay to co-operate with him. The 80th was one of the Regiments selected for this duty. Leaving on the 12th August, by forced marches it reached Saldanha Bay on the 16th. When the squadron came in sight, the troops lined the shore, the British ships anchoring across the Bay, blocked all egress for the Dutch, who, thus caught between two fires, on the 17th surrendered themselves prisoners of war. Some of the 80th were put on board the Dutch ships as guard, while the rest of the Regiment returned to Cape Town.

80th at The Cape.

On the 6th December, the same year, the Regiment left Cape Town for service in India. They landed at Madras Roads on the 11th and 15th of February, and encamped on the Esplanade, but on the 25th they re-embarked for Ceylon, where they arrived on the 14th of March, and landed at Trincomalle. Here they remained, under the command of Colonel Josiah Champagni and Lieut.-Colonel Ramsay

Move to India.

Digitized by Google

respectively, for four years. During this period the 80th lost by disease 5 Officers and 368 other ranks.

In February, 1801, the 80th were selected to form part of an Expedition assembling at Trincomalle, under Colonel Wellesley (afterwards Duke of Wellington). The British Government had decided on driving the French out of Egypt, and orders were given to General Abercrombie (who had been cooped up with 15,000 troops in crowded transports, beating about the Mediterranean, waiting for instructions) to proceed to Egypt. Other Regiments were ordered to proceed to his assistance, without any regard to distance, or the difficulties of transport.

General Baird was ordered to bring a Division from India to "co-operate" with Abercrombie, and the 80th formed part of Baird's force. They had some curious experiences. The Headquarters ship, commanded by Colonel Josiah Champagni, was prevented by contrary winds from sailing up the Red Sea, and eventually returned to Bombay, so that only seven Companies continued their passage. Of these, two were shortly afterwards shipwrecked on the shores of Abysinnia, fortunately with the loss of only five men, but they lost all their mess plate and their regimental records, which went down with the ill-fated transport. They managed to reach Suez eventually, and, having marched across the little desert, joined the other portion of the Regiment at Cairo, under the command of Lieut.-Col. Ramsay. The four Companies which remained with the Expedition disembarked at Kossier on the 8th of August, 1801. The Force from India, under Baird, on reaching Kossier was joined by an English Division from the Cape, and after a short stay there began its march across the burning and almost trackless sands of the Great Desert.

80th Shipwrecked off Abysinnia, 1801.

There were an immense number of camels and dromedaries attached to the Army, solely for the purpose of carrying water for the use of the soldiers, but the heat, both by day and night, was so excessive that the skins containing the water cracked and much of this valuable supply was lost. From want of water, combined with the excessive fatigue of the march, many of the soldiers died, while the suffering of the Army from opthalmia was very great, and many men of the 80th became totally blind. On the 15th day after quitting Kossier the force reached Keneh, on the banks of the Nile. During the march the 80th (South Staffords) and the Connaught Rangers formed the advanced guard. The route followed was as under:—

Egypt, 1802.

Digitized by Google

ROUTE FROM KOSSIER TO KENEH.

Kossier to New Wells	11 miles.	Water may be had.	
Half-way to Moilah	17 ,,	No water.	The Desert March.
Moilah	17 ,,	Water and provisions.	
Advanced Wells	9 ,,	Water.	
Half-way to Legaitte	19 ,,	No water.	
Legaitte	19 ,,	Water and provisions.	
Baromba	18 ,,	Water.	
Keneh	10 ,,	The Nile.(1)	

A march of 120 miles under such conditions, in fifteen days, is an achievement any Regiment may be justifiably proud of. At Keneh the Army embarked in boats and dropped down the Nile to Giza and Rhoda, where it disembarked and went into camp at El Hamed, near Rosetta, where it learned of the defeat of the French and the surrender of Alexandria. The Regiment arrived at Alexandria on the 10th December, 1801, where it remained in camp at Damietta and Alexandria for five months. Its return to India was then ordered, and in May, 1802, it began its return march across the Great Desert to Suez, arriving on the 8th of June, embarking the following day, under the command of Lieut.-Col. Harness. The Indian Army, for its services in Egypt, received the thanks of Parliament, of the Marquis of Wellesley, and the Government of Bengal; it shared in the prize-money equally with the Army from England, and the Regiments composing it were allowed to bear on their Colours the "SPHINX," superscribed "EGYPT," in commemoration of Abercrombie's brilliant victories. The 80th had a strength of 17 Officers and 311 men.

80th Battle Honours, "Sphinx, Egypt."

The Grand Sultan, Sellin the III., as a mark of his gratitude for the services rendered him by the British, presented each Officer of both Armies with a handsome Gold Medal, and to the Indian Army he expressed his most cordial thanks for having performed so perilous—and until then considered impracticable—a march across the Desert.(2)

On the morning of the 9th of June, the 80th sailed from Suez, and the following night was doomed to experience another unfortunate accident by shipwreck, for about the middle of the night the "Calcutta" transport, having on board one-half of the Regiment, under the command of Lieut.-Colonel Harness, struck on a rock near the Abyssinian

80th in Second Shipwreck.

(1) *Ex.* inform. Lieut.-Colonel M. B. Savage, C.B.E., D.S.O.

(2) A bar to the "Military General Service Medal" "EGYPT" was granted by an Order dated 11th February, 1850. As this bar was not granted until 49 years after the beginning of the campaign, there were few alive to receive the award. Those awarded to the 80th Regiment were 4 officers and 3 other ranks. The ribbon is dark crimson with blue edges.

Digitized by Google

shore. Lieut. Cookson volunteered with 30 men to go in a boat with a rope in order to establish a connection with the land. The boat was almost immediately swamped and 12 of the men drowned. Lieut. Cookson and the remainder fortunately gained the shore. At daylight the "Romney" frigate hove in sight and rescued the people from the ship, which was now almost a total wreck, and soon after broke in pieces. Lieut. Cookson and his small party were with great difficulty brought on board the "Romney" by means of a rope, in a most exhausted condition. The Regiment was conveyed by the "Romney" to Tor, a small and dirty village at the foot of Mount Sinai, on the coast of Arabia, where it landed. It shortly afterwards again embarked on board H.M.S. "Wilhelmena," and reached Madras without further mishap. From Madras the 80th proceeded to Calcutta, where it remained two months, when it was ordered to the Coromandel Coast, returning to Madras in September, 1802.

80th in India, 1804.

In the meantime, the three Companies which had become detached from the Regiment by the failure in the attempt to reach Egypt, were at first partly employed, under the command of Captain White, in garrisoning the Portuguese Settlement of Demain, then threatened by an attack by the French from Mauritius; while the other section, commanded by Lieut. Bradish, were actively employed in operations against the refractory Mahratta Chieftain, Malha Rea. During this service, the detachment was present at the storming and capture of the fortress of Kursee. They were subsequently sent on service into Malabar, and were employed, under Lieut.-Colonel Montresor, in the suppression of the Nairs of Wynaud and Coliote.

Capture of Kursee.

The seven Companies which had landed at Madras were stationed there until March, 1803, when they were ordered to take the field with the Army forming under Major-General Stuart to act against the confederate Mahratta Chieftains. The 80th were attached to the Brigade of Colonel the Hon. St. John, the whole under the command of Major-General Campbell; and was employed in the Dowab to act against the enemy until September, 1804. Peace being concluded, the whole of the Regiment became united at Cananore in November, after having been constantly separated and detached for nearly five years. Until this period of their reunion at Cananore, the detachments had been continually employed in operations against the native Chiefs—service of a most harassing and fatiguing nature, as unattended with reputation as it was unprofitable.

After a brief rest, the whole Regiment were again employed, under Colonel Macleod, against the rebellious Nairs in Wynaud. For five months it was more or less engaged and

Digitized by Google

in pursuit of the enemy, whose mode of fighting was annoying and dangerous: never meeting their antagonist in the field, but whenever they could have the advantage of protection or concealment by means of hill forts, stockades, or deep jungles, would begin to fire on the troops and would shoot them with poisoned arrows, taking care to secure their retreat before they were approached near enough to cause them much loss. Some of the ringleaders were captured, and the country having been subdued, the 80th returned to its quarters at Cananore. They remained at the latter place until May, 1807, when they left, under the command of Lieut.-Colonel Forbes, for Seringapatam. While in garrison here the Regiment suffered severely from a malignant fever peculiar to the station. Their casualties while at Seringapatam amounted to 223 deaths, and a great number were invalided and sent home, being unfit for service. Some of its Companies were sent with the Expedition against the Rajah of Travancore, under the command of Captain Dalrymple, but were not engaged in any operation of importance; and on the conclusion of Peace in April these six Companies returned to Cananore, where the Headquarter Companies had already arrived.

The Regiment remained in India until September, 1816, when orders were received for the 80th to hold itself in readiness to return to Europe. It was relieved by the 1st Battalion of the 89th Regiment (Royal Irish Fusiliers), and before leaving India the fit men of the Regiment were given the opportunity of volunteering into any Regiment in the Presidency. 273 men availed themselves of the offer, and entered the 53rd Regiment (K.S.L.I.), then stationed there. **Ordered Home, 1816.**

On the 6th February, 1816, Lieut.-Colonel Edwards died, universally and deservedly regretted by his brother Officers and other ranks; and the Regiment erected a monument to his memory in the churchyard of the Artillery cantonment at St. Thomas Mount, Madras. Colonel Edwards was the sole surviving Officer of those appointed to the 80th when it was raised.

On the 20th March, 1817, the cadre of the Regiment, consisting of 32 Officers, 36 Sergeants, 17 Drummers, and 126 rank and file, embarked for home on the chartered ship, "Lucy and Maria," after a service of upwards of 20 years in the East. They reached England on the 3rd of August, and went to the Depôt at Chatham for refitting.

Returning now to the history of the 38th, the Regiment, on its return to England from the Flanders Expedition, and after re-forming in Ireland, sent 913 men to form part of Baird's Expedition for the recapture of the Cape of Good

Digitized by Google

Hope. They sailed from Cork on 31st August, 1805, but on their arrival at Table Bay, on the morning of the 4th of January, 1806, Baird found the weather too rough to effect a landing. He, therefore, on the night of the 5th, detached Beresford with the 38th and his few mounted men to Saldanha Bay, to turn the enemy's rear. Next day, the weather being better, Baird was enabled to land the whole of his forces with few casualties. When the decisive battle took place at Blauberg, which gave Baird the possession of Cape Town,(1) the 38th were too far away to have any part in it, for after landing at Saldanha Bay, they had to march ninety miles through bad country, and only rejoined Baird on the 10th, after its capture, thus by a stroke of ill-luck just missing another Battle Honour, which they really deserved.

38th at The Cape.

After the recovery of the Cape of Good Hope, which had been prematurely given up by the Addington Ministry, Sir Hope Popham, who was in command of the Fleet which had assisted Sir David Baird in its recapture, seems to have been smitten with a desire to achieve fresh conquests, and turned his eyes to the Spanish Colonies on the Rio de la Plate. Without any authority from home—so it is said—he took his whole Naval force to South America, and induced Sir David Baird to allow General Beresford to accompany him with a portion of the land forces which had conquered the Cape. Calling at St. Helena, he arrived at the mouth of the River Plate early in June, and on the 24th of that month landed some troops at some distance from Buenos Ayres. Beresford's whole force did not exceed 1,600 men, and some Spanish troops, who attempted to dispute their passage, were dispersed by a single volley. On the 27th June the town capitulated, and Beresford entered the city without resistance. Meanwhile, orders had been sent to recall Sir H. Popham, but the conquest of the city had been made, and instead of being censured, he was praised. But before the rejoicings at home were finished, the captors were the captured; for a popular insurrection in the city had forced Beresford to surrender with his troops. Sir H. Popham then blockaded the Rio de la Plate, and sat down to wait for reinforcements. These arrived in the month of October, and comprised two Battalions of Infantry, three squadrons of horse, and other small detachments, numbering about 2,200 of all ranks; among them being the 38th, who sailed from the Cape on 29th August, 1806.

In South America.

On the 22nd September, 1806, General Sir S. Auchmuty was sent out from England with additional troops, convoyed by Admiral Sir C. Stirling, who had superseded Sir H. Popham.

---

(1) Fortescue, Hist. Brit. Army. Vol. V. p. 306-309.

Digitized by Google

On October 29th, of the same year, a landing was made at Maldonado, a town on the coast of Uruguay, which afforded good quarters for the troops, and a safe anchorage for the ships. The success of this landing was due to a brilliant attack by 400 men of the 38th, who carried the position with the bayonet, their losses being only six men. The town of Maldonado lies at a point on the North side of the River, jutting into the estuary of the River Plate, and gave the British commander a position from which he could attack Monte Video; both from the open country behind the town, and also enabled him to outflank the enemy. The town was invested by the British forces, and a sally made by the Spaniards, who were 6,000 strong, was repulsed with great slaughter. The 38th formed part of the 1st Infantry Brigade, under Colonel Browne.

38th Capture Maldonado.

The plan of the attack on Monte Video was to make a breach in the citadel walls, and under cover of the darkness to force an entrance into the citadel. By gradually advancing his guns to within 600 yards of the ramparts, General Auchmuty had, by the 2nd of February, made a practicable breach in the walls. The assault was to take place before daybreak on the morning of the 3rd, and the troops destined for the assault consisted of the 38th (South Staffords), led by Colonel S. T. Vassall, the Light Brigade and the Light Companies. These were supported by the South Lancashire and the Royal Irish Fusiliers. The remaining forces consisted of the 17th Lancers, 20th Hussars, 21st Lancers, Loyal North Lancashire Regiment, one Company Highland Light Infantry, with 700 Marines and Seamen to protect the rear.

At the appointed hour the troops marched in silence to the assault. Although darkness favoured the attacking force in allowing them to approach almost to the walls without being seen by the enemy, yet it brought with it its disadvantages of obscuring the breach at which they were to enter, with the result that, while the Officers were running to and fro to find the breach, the enemy poured down a heavy storm of fire, which occasioned much damage to the troops. It was discovered eventually that the breach had been filled in by the enemy during the night, and our soldiers solved the difficulty for themselves by climbing over the walls, and with the bayonet fighting their way into the town. Street after street was disputed by the Spaniards with musketry and artillery, but in vain. By daylight our troops were in complete possession, and by half-past eight the town had surrendered.

Attack on Monte Video.

It is no small tribute to the gallantry and honour of our men to know from the Commander-in-Chief's despatch that, notwithstanding the severe fighting which had taken place, order was completely restored before the morning had passed.

Digitized by Google

and that the women were walking about the streets without fear of being molested. The enemy lost very heavily, 800 killed, 400 wounded; 2,000 Officers and men, including the Governor, being taken prisoners. In this attack the 38th lost heavily, 27 killed, 121 wounded; nine of their Officers were struck down, and three of them mortally wounded,(1) Colonel S. T. Vassal, commander of the 38th, dying of tetanus as a result of his wounds. Owing to the soil where so many of the men fell being infected with the bacillus of tetanus, many of the wounded contracted this fell disease, which was always fatal.

The capture of Monte Video gave the 38th their third Battle Honour,

MONTE VIDEO, 1807.

Preparations for Attack on Buenos Ayres.

In the meantime, the Government at home had decided upon the conquest of the entire province of Buenos Ayres, and without informing General Auchmuty of their intentions sent out from England General Whitelocke to take supreme command. All accounts show that he was a man totally unfitted to have command of any troops. He was given what the Government considered sufficient reinforcements for his purpose, and further assistance was to be furnished by troops who were operating under General Crawford, who had been instructed to proceed to the Rio de la Plate; but when General Whitelocke arrived at General Auchmuty's headquarters he found that neither General Crawford nor the promised reinforcements had arrived.

In spite of Brig.-General Sir S. Auchmuty's strong protest, General Whitelocke decided to take the town by assault with such troops as he had at hand. The 38th, with the 5th and 87th Regiments, still formed part of General Auchmuty's Brigade, and were well-seasoned soldiers, of splendid fighting quality, while those Whitelocke had brought with him were mostly raw levies, with scarcely any training, and quite unfitted for the climate. Owing to a dispute with a brother Officer, and out of spite, two Companies of the 38th were left at Monte Video, with some odds and ends of other Corps and a body of local Militia. "It was a sheer waste of good material to keep these troops at the base, for the 38th was an admirable Corps which had proved its worth in the earlier campaign."(2)

Thus, while these seasoned and hardened troops, who had been for months in the country, were left to walk about Monte

(1) Fortescue, Hist. Brit. Army. Vol. V. p. 384-6.
(2) *Ibid.* Vol. V. p. 396.

Digitized by Google

Video, the new raw reinforcements from home, after nine months on shipboard, were sent out for the attack on Buenos Ayres.

The town of Buenos Ayres is built on the South bank of the River Plate, in the Argentine Republic, and the streets all run in parallel lines at right-angles to the river front. The idea of the plan of attack was to surround the town from the land side, and detach five different contingents to carry certain parallel streets by assault and converge on the citadel in the centre of the river front.

By some means not recorded, General Auchmuty seems to have obtained the two Companies of the 38th left at the base, for his part of the plan was to take the full Regiment "to seize the Plaza de Toros, with the ground adjacent to it and there to take post." Next to the 38th, in succession, came the 87th, 5th, 36th, and 88th Regiments, who were to attack to the South of the 38th's position.

How of all the attacking parties none succeeded in gaining their objective excepting the 38th, and how the 38th achieved theirs, is best told in the following extract from an old magazine:—

How the 38th Stormed the Bull Ring.

"On the extreme left, the 38th, under Colonel Nugent, after about twenty minutes' march, found itself in a narrow lane leading to the Plaza de Toros, at the head of which was a large house occupied by the enemy. The lane was so deep in mire that many, both of the Officers and men, had their shoes drawn off their feet, but the Regiment hurried on, leaving a party to force the doors of the house, and found itself exposed to a concentrated fire of artillery from several guns stationed at various points round the 'Bull Ring.' The Ring itself, a brick building of twelve sides, presented nothing but a blank wall, with a gallery above, from which the Spanish sharpshooters could fire without danger to themselves. Colonel Nugent, after losing several men in a vain attempt to storm the batteries, withdrew his Battalion and sent two Companies round to his left to occupy a house on the cliff by the enemy's extreme right, in the hope of turning their flank. The house at the end of the lane was forced, and a single grenadier of the 38th, one of the worst characters in the Regiment, dashed in by himself, and made his way straight to the roof. There he encountered fifteen men, of whom he bayonetted two instantly, whereupon several of the rest feigned death, but a group of four retired into a corner to make a concerted attack upon him. Still singlehanded, he rushed at these, bayonetted one and had driven another to leap from the house, when his comrades arrived and made a speedy end of the survivors.

Digitized by Google

"Shortly afterwards the second house by the cliff was forced, and the British opened a galling fire from the roof upon the enemy's gunners. These presently spiked their guns and returned into the Bull Ring, but there remained still a closed battery to be dealt with, and this was captured by a sudden and unexpected rush by the 38th from the back door of the house. The gunners, some 60 in number, unable to reach the Bull Ring, took refuge in a barrack, but were so closely pursued that the British entered with them, and after a short but savage encounter in the barrack-rooms put everyone of the sixty to death."(1)

History does not record the fate of this gallant grenadier; but, desperate character though he may have been, he has given his small tribute to the story of the Regiment.

While their comrades had been dealing with the gunners, the rest of the 38th had been busy seizing the guns; and, finding a twelve-pounder unspiked, turned it upon the Bull Ring. At this stage General Auchmuty appeared on the scene with some of the 87th, and surrounded the building completely. After a few shots, parties of the enemy came running out, only to find their retreat cut off, and presently those that remained in the building hung out the white flag and surrendered at discretion.(2) In achieving this successful result, the 38th lost 1 Officer and 8 men killed, and 1 Officer and 41 rank and file wounded.

In spite of the valour and success of the troops under General Auchmuty, due in no small degree to the brilliant work of the 38th, under Colonel Nugent, the other attacking columns met with disaster.

The failure of this attack on Buenos Ayres caused the British to evacuate the province, and from South America the old 38th was brought back to Ireland in 1807, and in 1808 were sent out to Spain to take their part in the Peninsula War. While in Ireland, a second Battalion was formed for the 38th, and shared in the Peninsula campaign, under Lord Wellington.

---

(1) Colbourne's Military Magazine, December, 1836.
(2) Fortescue. Vol. V. p. 419.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IV.

Peninsular War—France—Cape of Good Hope—First and Second Burmese Wars—New South Wales—Sikh War.
1808—1854.

THE year 1808 opened with gloomy prospects for England; Napoleon was practically master of Europe, and Great Britain was faced with a formidable combination of enemies. Isolated by Napoleon's strategy she had as foes, France, Russia, Austria, and Prussia arrayed against her. Portugal and Sweden alone refused to obey the orders of Napoleon, who sent an army to occupy Lisbon, and then proceeded to invade Spain, where he soon installed his brother Joseph on the throne. Napoleon, by attacking Portugal, the ancient ally of England, brought Britain into the conflict, not only for the rescue of Portugal, but, in the words of Sheridan in the House of Commons on June 15th, 1808, "for the rescue of the world," against Bonaparte's dictatorship. **Peninsular War.**

Sir Arthur Wellesley was appointed to command the expedition, and on August 1st, 1808, landed a force of 10,000 men in Mondego Bay, on the coast of Portugal; Sir John Moore, with a larger army, was to co-operate in the North. Lisbon, the capital, was for the moment in the possession of the French Army, commanded by Marshal Junot. The first Battalion of the 38th Regiment, with a strength of 47 officers and 1,032 N.C.O's and men, under the command of Colonel Sir Charles Greville, formed part of the expeditionary force under Sir Arthur Wellesley, and sailed from Cork on July 13th, 1808. On arriving in Portugal, they were placed in the 1st Brigade under Major-General Rowland Hill, with the 5th and 9th Regiments. (1) On August 17th Wellesley attacked and defeated the French at Roleia with great loss. The flank companies of the 38th were part of the forces engaged which caused the retreat of the French General Delaborde. They went into action 957 strong and came out with a loss of only four men. Four days later, 21st August, 1808, still part of Hill's Brigade, they took part in the decisive battle of Vimiera, a village about 40 miles north of Lisbon, where Wellesley inflicted a crushing defeat on the French, under Marshal Junot. Wellesley's difficulties in **38th at Roleia, 1808.** **Vimiera, 1808.**

(1) Fortescue, Hist. Brit. Army. Vol. VI. p. 191.

Digitized by Google

this campaign were made worse by the action of the War Office at home, who had sent out first General Sir H. Burrard to take over the command from Sir Arthur Wellesley on the day this battle was fought, and on the day subsequent to this victory, Sir Hugh Dalrymple arrived to supersede Sir H. Burrard, so that the British Army, with an enemy in front, had no fewer than three commanders in twenty-four hours! Immediately after the action, negotiations were entered into with the French to secure their evacuation of Portugal. The Convention of Cintra was signed, and the three Generals were recalled to England. A Court of Inquiry was held at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea, when Sir Arthur Wellesley was exonerated, and he returned to the Peninsula, where, as everyone knows, he carried the war to a successful conclusion. On the recall of the three British Generals, Sir John Moore assumed command of the Army in Portugal, on the 6th October, 1808. But Napoleon, incensed at the disgrace of the first defeat of the French by the English, made preparation to drive the "English leopard into the sea," and sent into Spain an army of 200,000 troops, including the veterans of Jena, Austerlitz, and Friedland. Great Britain despatched a Division of 10,000 men from England to Corunna, under Sir David Baird, but on the 26th October Sir John Moore had decided to proceed to the relief of Madrid, and so rapidly did he march that by November 8th the main army and headquarters had reached Almeida on the Spanish border. In the meantime Napoleon had dealt such rapid and powerful blows on the Spanish Army that he had practically the whole of Spain at his mercy, the only barrier to his success lay in the small British Army under Sir John Moore, and the towns of Madrid and Saragossa. Pushing on, Napoleon, by the 4th of December, had secured the capitulation of Madrid and was free to turn his huge forces against Sir John Moore, who, finding it hopeless to rally the disorganised Spanish Armies, decided to retire on Corunna; he ordered Hope to rejoin him, and directed Baird to regain Corunna. On the 11th December, Moore, with his own and Hope's Divisions, marched towards the town of Valladolid, and on the 20th united with Baird, the effective strength of the united forces being 19,000 infantry, 2,300 cavalry, and 1,350 artillerymen, with 60 guns. Against these slender forces he was opposed by Napoleon with an army of 100,000 men. The masterly way Moore conducted his retreat was little short of marvellous. Through roads deep in snow, Napoleon was pressing on, and during this retreat of the British Army to the North West of Spain, their sufferings were intense. Day by day the rearguard cavalry under Lord Henry W. Paget (who raised the 80th Regiment), kept the foe in check, while the jaded and worn-out infantry

Sir John Moore's Retreat to Corunna, 1809.

Digitized by Google

pushed on, hopeless, heartless, and almost in rags, leaving their dead and dying in the snow.

On the 31st December Moore quitted Astorga and so close was the pursuit that Napoleon entered it at the head of 80,000 men the next day. In the retreat on Corunna, Captain Werge, Commanding the Grenadier Company and No. 8 Company of the 38th, held the bridge at Benevente against the French Light Cavalry who were trying to repair it (the bridge having been destroyed by floods). He and his party were very nearly cut off from the Army, but eventually succeeded in joining the 38th with small loss. Captain Werge was afterwards killed at the Siege of San Sebastien. Sir John Moore's sole object now was to avoid a useless battle against overwhelming odds, and embark his men on board ship for home. His army had now become reduced to about 14,000 men; they reached Corunna on the 11th January, 1809. The 38th (South Staffords) were in General Fane's Brigade, part of the 3rd Division, commanded by Lt.-Gen. Mackenzie Fraser, and Sir John Moore sent orders to Sir David Baird to direct the leading Division (Fraser's) to halt at Lugo, but the dragoon who was entrusted with the message got drunk and lost it. The result was disastrous to Fraser's troops, for as Napier says:—"In lieu of resting two days at Lugo, that General unwittingly continued his journey to St. Jago de Compostella, and then returned without food or rest, losing above 400 stragglers." Disorder was rampant among the troops, and the men, dispirited by their hardships, lost all discipline, and complete disorganisation followed. On reaching the coast not a single ship of the fleet was visible, so there was nothing else for it but to defend the position in front of the town of Corunna, and fight till the fleet should come round. Moore quartered his army in Corunna, while the reserve were posted at El Burgo. The jaded troops had now a brief breathing time, discipline was restored to the ranks, and fresh ammunition served out. On the 14th cheering in the streets hailed the appearance of our fleet from Vigo, at the same time it was reported that the French were in position on the heights above the town and getting under arms. A range of heights forms an amphitheatre round the village of Elvina, about a mile distant from Corunna, and on these Sir John Moore drew up his army.

Battle of Corunna, 1809.

General Hope's Division was posted on the left, next came Baird with his Division, while across the valley the dark uniforms of the Rifle Corps were seen in extended order, supported by General Fraser's Division, which covered the road to Vigo, and protected the principal approach to Corunna. Under Lord Paget, the Reserve took post about half a mile in rear of General Hope's Division. At about

Digitized by Google

2 p.m. the trial of strength between 20,000 French and 14,000 British began. The columns of the French Infantry, preceded by clouds of skirmishers, advanced and attacked Elvina, our pickets were driven out of the village, and after its capture the French mass divided with yells of triumph. One portion turned their fire and steel against Baird's command, and the other turned his right, by advancing up the valley. Sir John Moore despatched two regiments against Elvina to hold the French in check, until he could deliver a counter stroke. He ordered Fraser's Division to support that of Paget, and gave the latter an order to descend into the valley, the French were repulsed with heavy loss and Elvina again changed hands. Towards evening, Paget's attacks became more and more successful, and the French were driven back. The position at night-fall was that Merinet's French Division had been completely defeated, Herke's Brigade had been severely mauled, and another French Brigade had suffered severely. It was just at this moment of victory that Sir John Moore was struck with a round shot, which unhorsed and mortally wounded him, but he lived long enough to know of the defeat of the French. The command then devolved upon General Hope, and though the battle was won, he resolved to embark the army and leave the country. The French had no sooner fallen back than, the boats being all in readiness, about 10 p.m., Brigade after Brigade filed silently down to the beach in the dark, and embarked on board the Fleet. Sir John Moore's body, wrapped in his military cloak, was laid to rest in the citadel of Corunna, where, later, Marshal Soult raised a monument to his memory. By 3 p.m. on the 18th all the troops were on board and the fleet sailed for England. The General, with his dead comrades, alone remained at Corunna; and though disastrously, yet gloriously, thus ended our first campaign in the Spanish Peninsula.

Death of Sir John Moore.

The fleet of transports, while on their way to England, were overtaken by a terrible storm and were scattered, many ships being wrecked, and the remainder, driving up Channel, landed the soldiers at any port along the coast from Plymouth to Dover, so that thousands of men, in a state of wretchedness, were thrown upon the shores of the country, horrifying the people by their ragged squalor and dirt. The officers were in no better condition, and Captain T. Willshire of the 38th landed at Portsmouth without a shirt to his back, his chief covering being a long mantle lined with tiger skin; walking down the High Street, he was quickly reminded of his deplorable condition by hearing a woman exclaim to her squalling brat: "There, if you are not quiet directly, I will throw you to that tiger man, and he will eat you up."(1)

38th Return to England.

(1) Soldiers of the Victorian Era.

Digitized by Google

Willshire beat a hasty retreat into the nearest ready-made clothing shop and provided himself with more suitable clothing.

While prosecuting the war against France, the British Government continued its policy of frittering away its forces in useless expeditions, for instead of putting forth its whole strength in the Peninsula, where Sir Arthur Wellesley had returned in April, 1809, it embarked on the unfortunate Walcheren expedition.

On the 27th July, 1809, an expedition under the command of Lord Chatham and Admiral Sir Richard Strachan, consisting of 39,312 men, including the 38th, sailed from the Downs with the object of destroying the French ships and Arsenals in the Scheldt, and at Antwerp and Flushing, as well as capturing the island of Walcheren. The troops landed at Walcheren and South Beveland; among those landed at the latter place being the 38th, who were brigaded with the 9th (Norfolks) and 42nd (Black Watch), under Major General Montressor. Flushing surrendered after two days' bombardment. With this exception, the expedition was as unsuccessful as it was ill managed, a popular song of the period put the situation in a nutshell:—

38th in Walcheren Expedition.

"Lord Chatham, with his sword drawn,
Waited for Sir Richard Strachan;
Sir Richard, longing to be at 'em,
Waited for the Earl of Chatham!"(1)

Meantime, the French had increased their forces in Spain to a total of 300,000 men. After the fight at Talavera, Wellington realised that he was too weak to cope in the field with the immense forces that France had poured into the Peninsula. He wanted time to organise the Portuguese and Spanish Armies; so, retiring into Portugal, he threw up the famous lines of Torres Vedras, behind which shelter he quickly re-organised the Portuguese Army. Battles were avoided during 1809-10, but on 27th September, 1810, he determined to attack the French at Busaco

The troops under Sir A Wellesley (now the Duke of Wellington) numbered 50,000, against a French force under Massena of 70,000. The 38th, under Colonel John Nugent, were in the 5th Division, commanded by Major-General Leith, and formed part of General Barnes' Brigade. This was the newly-raised 2nd Battalion of the 38th, which had been sent out while the 1st Battalion was reforming in Ireland, after their return from the Walcheren expedition, they had

2nd Battalion of the 38th.

(1) Soldiers of the Victorian Era.

Digitized by Google

a strength of 599 rank and file, but raw levies as they were, the training they got under Lord Wellington soon "licked them into shape," for at one critical period of the battle of Busaco they were ordered by General Leith to turn the French flank; while the Norfolk regiment attacked in front, the 2/38th brilliantly attacked and carried a hill with the bayonet, their attack, combined with that of the Norfolk's, secured the victory. The 2/38th's casualities were 1 officer and 5 men wounded, and 17 men killed.

2nd Battalion at Busaco.

Wellington had once more shown his men that they were a match for the French in the field, but still clinging to his old plan of campaign, he retired behind the lines of Torres Vedras, where the British were secure. Although several battles were fought before Wellington began his irresistible and victorious march into France, the 38th do not figure in any of them except the two seiges of Badajoz; at the first attempt in 1811 we were unsuccessful, and our losses heavy, but after the capture of Cuidad Rodrigo, in January, 1812, Wellington at once opened a determined offensive against Badajoz. The city of Badajoz stands on a rocky ridge which forms the last spur of the Toledo range in Spain. It was a place of extraordinary strength, Wellington employed 18,000 men in the siege of it, it was held by a garrison of 5,000 under a soldier (General Phillipson) with a real genius for defence. Hill and Graham covered the siege, Picton, Barnard, Kemp, and Colville led the assaults. The trenches were held by the 3rd, 4th, 5th and the famous Light Division. "Perhaps no siege in history ever witnessed either more furious valour in the assault, or more cool and skilled courage in the defence." The siege lasted exactly 25 days and cost the besiegers 5,000 men, or an average loss of 200 men per day. It was waged throughout in stormy weather, with rivers constantly rising, and the tempest perpetually blowing; yet the thunder of the attack never ceased for an instant. On the night of April 6th, Wellington determined to assault. No fewer than seven attacks were to be delivered. Two of them, on the bridgehead across the Guadiana and on the Pardaleras, were mere feints. But on the extreme right Picton, with the 3rd Division, was to cross the river Rivallas and escalade the Castle, whose walls were from eighteen to twenty-four feet high. General Leith, with the 5th Division, composed of the following Regiments:—1st, 4th, 9th, 30th. 2/38th, and 44th Regiments, was to attack the opposite or western extremity of the town, the bastion of St. Vincente, where the glacis was mined, the ditch deep, and the scarp 30 feet high.

Siege of Badajoz, 1812.

Against the actual breaches which had been made, Generals Colville and Barnard were to lead the Light and 4th Divisions,

Digitized by Google

the former attacking the bastion of Santa Maria, and the latter the Trinidad. The hour was fixed for 10 o'clock, it was an intensely dark night. A lighted 'carcas' thrown from the Castle discovered Picton's men standing in ordered array and compelled them to attack at once. The column reached the trench at the foot of the Castle walls, and was instantly overwhelmed with the fire of the besieged. Five ladders were raised, and in the face of a withering fire the troops swarmed up, an officer leading, but the first files were at once crushed by cannon fire, and the ladders slipped into the angle of the abutments. One ladder remained, and, a private soldier leading, the eager redcoated crowd swarmed up it. The brave fellow leading was shot, but the next man to him leaped over the parapet, and was followed quickly by others, and this thin stream of desperate men climbed singly and in the teeth of the flashing musketry, up the solitary ladder and carried the Castle. In the meanwhile the 4th and Light Divisions had flung themselves with cool and silent speed on the breaches. The storming party of each Division leaped into the ditch, which, owing to the explosion of a mine by the enemy, became in an instant a flaming crater, and 500 of the storming party were killed. The Light Division stood on the brink of the smoking ditch for a moment, amazed at the sight, and then "With a shout that matched even the sound of the explosion" they leaped into it and swarmed up to the breach. The 4th Division came running up and descended with equal fury, but the ditch opposite the Trinadad was filled with water, and the head of the Division leaping into it, about 100 men perished there. "The breaches were impassable. Across the top of the great slope of the broken wall glittered a fringe of sword blades, fixed in heavy beams chained together and set deep in the ruins. For ten feet in front the ascent was covered with loose planks studded with sharp iron points. Behind the glittering edge of sword blades stood the solid ranks of the French, each man supplied with three muskets, and their fire scourged the British ranks like a tempest."

Siege of Badajoz, 1812.

All this while General Picton was actually in Badajoz and held the Castle securely, but made no attempt to clear the breach. On the extreme west of the town the 5th Division had commenced the false attack on the outwork called Pardaleras, and on the right of the Guadiana the Portuguese were sharply engaged at the end of the long bridge. Thus the town of Badajoz was literally zoned with fire, the flashes of which were reflected a thousand times in the waters around it. During the feint on the Pardaleras, Walker's Brigade, surmounting every obstacle—a mine that was sprung beneath their feet, beams of wood, boiling water, pitch, and live shells rolled down on their heads, showers of grape shot from

Digitized by Google

the flank of the ditch, and withering musketry fire—had won the ramparts of St. Vincente, and, wheeling to the right, advanced in the direction of the breaches, where their presence was sorely needed. But by one of those strange accidents which occur in war, and for which there can be no accounting, an unexpected attack by the French Reserve under General Veillande drove back the stormers with a firm and rapid charge, pitching some of the men over the walls, killing others outright, and clearing the ramparts of St. Vincente. There, however, General Leith had placed Colonel Nugent with the 2/38th as a Reserve, and when the French came up, shouting and slaying all before them, this Battalion, over 200 strong, arose, and with one close volley and a bayonet charge, destroyed the attacking French Reserve. Then the panic ceased, the soldiers rallied, and in compact order once more charged along the walls, towards the breaches.

Counter Attack by 2nd Battalion, 38th.

The tumult still stormed and raged at the eastern breaches, where the men of the Light and 4th Divisions were dying sullenly, and the men of the 5th Division marched with all speed across the town to take the Eastern breach in rear. The streets were empty, but the silent houses were bright with lamps. The men of the 5th Division pressed forward rapidly, the tramp of their marching feet startled the French, who, finding themselves caught in the rear, left their positions and fled. The Light and 4th Divisions broke through the gap, hitherto barred by flame and steel, and Badajoz was won.

The 2/38th, by their unexpected attack on the French Reserve, made the turning point of victory; the casualties of the 2/38th in this attack were 1 officer and 12 men killed, 4 officers and 25 men wounded.(1) In the final assault on Badajoz the British lost 3,500 men. "No nation, or age, ever sent forth braver troops to battle than those who stormed Badajoz."

By his capture of Cuidad Rodrigo and Badajoz, Wellington deprived the French of any rallying point on the road to Madrid, and prevented any further attempt on Lisbon. In June, 1812, the 1/38th Regiment, 1,100 strong, under the command of Colonel (afterwards Sir Charles) Greville, embarked from Cork for the Peninsula, Captain T. Willshire in command of the Light Company. Ensign Freer, who embarked with the Regiment, writes in his diary:—"The Regiment was now complete, and both as to officers and men, an admirable example of a British force."(2) Ensign Freer remarks that the Grenadier Company of the 38th were all men of six feet and over.

First 38th Land in Portugal, 1812.

(1) Battle Honours, Brit. Army, p. 178.
(2) Soldiers of the Victorian Era.

Digitized by Google

They landed at Lisbon on 15th June, 1812, and at once proceeded to join Wellington's Army at Salamanca, but only joined the 5th Division on the morning of the battle. They were brigaded with the 3rd Battalion of the 1st Royal Scots and the 1st Battalion of the 9th Regiment (Norfolks) under Lt.-Gen. Leith, and in this Brigade and 5th Division the 1/38th served throughout the war, Colonel Nugent, who commanded the 2nd Battalion, taking command after Sir Charles Greville's promotion to the command of a Brigade.

Battle of Salamanca, 1812.

After an intense fight of varying favour, the British gained the victory. Early in the battle General Leith was wounded, and the command of the Brigade in which the 38th were was taken over by their chief, Colonel the Hon. Sir C. Greville.

Ensign Freer in his diary describes how at one point of the battle, their Brigade was "so close to the main body of the French that the shot and shell which they poured upon us from the heights above could do us little damage. We were shortly ordered to stand up, and General Leith, who then commanded us, made a flying speech to each Regiment as he passed. To us he said: "As for you, 38th, I have only to say, behave as you have always done."(1) The Brigade then advanced under very heavy fire at quick time without firing a shot, until within about 100 yards from the French, when "Halt, fire a volley and charge!" were the orders given. The men, running up the rocks as if on level ground, charged with the bayonet. The French stood for a moment, but quickly fled, and several times tried to reform, but in vain, their right was turned and the flight became general. Captain T. Willshire, who commanded the Light Company of the 38th throughout the day, was twice wounded, but refused to quit the field. Other officers wounded were Lieut.-Colonel Miles, Captains Gullie and Fullarton, Lieuts. Ince, Peddie and Laws, Ensigns Magee, Wilcocks, Byam and Freer, with 114 other ranks. The killed included Captain Taylor, Lieut. Bromfield, and 14 other ranks.

The strength of the two Battalions at Salamanca was: 1/38th, 36 officers and 764 men; 2/38th, 20 officers and 281 men, and their losses were fairly evenly distributed, considering their numbers, for the 1st Battalion lost 2 officers and 14 other ranks killed, 12 officers and 115 other ranks wounded; while the 2nd Battalion's losses were 9 men killed, 2 officers and 40 other ranks wounded.(2) The way was now open to Madrid, and on August 12th, Wellington entered the city in triumph.

---

(1) Soldiers of the Victorian Era.
(2) Oman, Peninsula War. Vol. V. p. 594.

Digitized by Google

At Cuidad Rodrigo, Wellington perfected his organisation of the forces under him in preparation for the coming struggle in the summer. Both 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 38th were present at the siege of Burgos, and suffered severe casualties.

38th in Retreat from Burgos.

During the retreat from Burgos, the 5th Division, with the 38th, were covering the retreat, and owing to the rapid advance of the French were compelled to fight a sharp rearguard action. "Lord Wellington, coming up to us at this time, blurted out: 'They are coming too forward and must be driven back.' The General of my Brigade answered, 'My Lord, I will take care of that.' "(1) Right well did they take care of it, for they drove the advancing French back through the river right up to the mouths of their guns. The 38th lost Captain Foster in the charge, who was cut in half by a cannon ball, and on retiring back through the river they again suffered severely, but, gaining the bed of a dry canal, they prevented the French from advancing for more than two hours. While they were in the dried-up canal, a recently promoted officer of the 38th, Major Ovens, was killed, having the paper in his pocket which contained his promotion. He could not resist the temptation to read it again, frequently raising his eyes over the canal bank to watch the enemy, and not taking sufficient cover, he was killed by a cannon shot which decapitated him.

2nd Battalion Disbanded, 1814.

On the 3rd December, 1812, the 2nd Battalion of the 38th was ordered to draft all effective men into the 1st Battalion, and all ineffectives were sent home with the 2nd Battalion, which arrived at Gosport on 25th February, 1813, and was quartered at Winchester until disbandment on 25th December, 1814. During the winter of 1812 the French carried on a harassing warfare in Spain and Portugal, but Napoleon's star, so long in the ascendant, now began to wane. His gigantic power had received a mortal blow amid the snow and fires of the retreat from Moscow.

On the 22nd May, 1913, Wellington, for the last time quitted Portugal, and began his victorious march into France. The 5th Division, including the 38th, was now under the command of Lieut.-General Sir Thomas Graham, and traversing the mountainous district of Tras os Montes, and passing the River Esla, turned the enemy's line of defence on the River Douro. Pressing onwards, Wellington forced the retreating French to abandon all the ports in the north of Spain, except Santander and Bilbao. Determined to cut off King Joseph's communications with France, Wellington brought his left-wing round, and descending towards the great

(1) Soldiers of the Victorian Era.

Digitized by Google

road to Bilbao, marched towards Vittoria, reaching Bayas on the 19th June, where the French were drawn up in three lines behind the River Zadorra.

The basin, at the further end of which Vittoria is situated, is about 10 miles long by eight wide, and is divided in two parts by the Zadorra, which flows into the Ebro, passing through two lofty mountain ridges, that on the left being the heights of Marillas, and on the right those of Puebla, Vittoria being about eight miles distant from the Pass of Puebla.

The 38th, who formed part of the force under Sir Thomas Graham, suffered great privations in their difficult march across many miles of country intersected by rivers, and crossed by mountain ranges. On the 18th of June they took part in a skirmish at Osma, and on the 20th joined up with Wellington's forces.

On the eventful morning of the battle of Vittoria, the strength of the opposing forces was for the first time slightly to Wellington's advantage. He had a force of 60,000 men and 90 guns, and with the addition of the Spanish Auxiliaries, his entire force consisted of 80,000 of all arms. The French Army, owing to the depletion of their forces, numbered 70,000 in strength, while King Joseph's position was weak, as he had to defend seven crossings of the river.(1) Wellington decided to make three distinct attacks on the enemy's position, and arranged his forces for the attack, so that the only avenue of escape for the French was by Pampeluna.

38th at Vittoria.

Wellington himself led the centre of the attack with the flower of his army, some 30,000 strong. The 38th, led by Colonel Sir Charles Greville, and in the 5th Division, under Sir Thomas Graham, were ordered to operate on the extreme left, by the Bilbao road, against General Reille, who was defending the passage of the Zadora by the bridge of Gomara Mayo. "To effect this movement, which, if successful, would completely turn the French position, and shut them up between the river and the Puebla mountains, General Graham had under his orders 20,000 men, including the 1st and 5th Divisions, two Portuguese Brigades, two Brigades of German Cavalry, and a Spanish Division, in all about 20,000 men." General Oswald, commanding the 5th Division, attacked Reille's advanced troops and drove them from the village of Arauguis and the heights commanding the bridges of Ariaga and Gomara Mayor, and, continuing his advance, forced the French to retire from Durana, thus cutting off the retreat of the main army and confining it to the road of Pampeluna.

(1) Soldiers of the Victorian Era.

Digitized by Google

Graham had an important and difficult part to play, he had not only to drive the French out of their positions and turn their right flank, but he had also to regulate his advance in accordance with the progress of the columns on his right. The right column under General Sir Rowland Hill, had successfully carried the heights covering the great road to Puebla, and, pushing through the Puebla Pass, carried the village of Subijana de Alva. The French General, Gazan, made heroic attempts to retake the village, but failed, and Hill, though he had sustained considerable loss, held his position. Meanwhile the right centre column, having secured the crossing of the Zadorra, drove the French back to Vittoria, Wellington flinging three of his Divisions across the river, supported by many guns and his heavy Cavalry, after heavy fighting, captured the villages of Margarita, Hermandad and Arinez, and drove the French back in confusion. On the allied left, the Spaniards, under Graham, had turned the French right and captured the village of Gamarra Menor, close to the Zadorra and pushed across the river to the Bayonne Road, where desperate fighting took place, the bridges being more than once captured by the British, and recaptured by the French; finally, after a hard contest, Graham established himself in the villages, and from his position there, threatened the French flank should they take the Bayonne Road; but acting under his instructions he did not cross the bridges until the allied centre and right had forced the enemy further back through Vittoria.

Battle of Vittoria, 1813.

The French were gradually forced to abandon all their positions, but made a final stand on the high ground about a mile west of Vittoria. Here they fought gallantly to maintain this position, but in the end were compelled to abandon all attempts to fall back towards Bayonne, and leaving their Artillery and baggage on the field, fled along the Pampeluna Road, pursued by the allied cavalry. The 38th's losses in the battle were slight, two officers and six men wounded, while Colonel Sir Charles Greville had his horse shot under him.

They were not so fortunate a month or so later, when they took part in the attack and capture of San Sebastian, a fortress of great strength on the north coast of Spain, held by the French. Still in the 5th Division they formed part of the left attack, and on 24th July, led by Colonel C. Greville, they were ordered to assault the lesser and more distant breach which had been made in the defences. No more desperate duty had ever been entrusted to British troops. "The distance from the trenches to the points of attack were more than 300 yards along the contracted space lying between the hornwork and the river, the ground was strewed with rocks covered by slippery seaweed, the tide had left large and

Digitized by Google

deep pools of water, the parapet of the hornwork was entire as well as the retaining walls, the parapets of the other works, and the two towers which flanked the beach, although injured, were far from being ruined, and every place was garnished with musketeers."

The storming columns moved out on the dark morning of July 25th, and, aided by the explosion of a mine, were enabled to reach the enemy's works, but owing to lack of support were forced to retire, those retiring being met by the advancing troops. A scene of great confusion arose, various units being mixed up in disorder, and in spite of the efforts of their officers, regiments became hopelessly mixed in a narrow path between the hornwork and the river where they could neither advance nor retreat. Here great casualties were incurred. The siege was then converted into a blockade, and with the advent of new, heavy battering trains from England the siege was continued.

Siege of San Sebastian, 1813.

A fresh attack was made by volunteers from fourteen regiments, including the 38th, under Colonel Greville, and although they carried some of the traverses of the position their efforts to hold it were in vain, well did they maintain their reputation for discipline and valour in the terrible conflict, but they failed to win the breach.

A fresh bombardment of the walls was made, and then a number of powder barrels was exploded under the walls. Under cover of this confusion and smoke the British again attacked, and after severe fighting for five hours the town was won. In the final assault, the 38th, led by their Colonel, Sir Charles Greville, after desperate fighting, were the second regiment to enter the breach in the fortress. Their casualties in this fight were 9 officers killed and 12 wounded, 33 N.C.O.'s and men killed and 174 wounded.(1)

After the capture of San Sebastian, Wellington then prepared to force the passage of the Lower Bidassoa and invade France, he selected the 1st and 5th Divisions for the attack on the French defences, and the 5th Division crossed the half mile of sands at low water, and, passing the fords on the river, gained the right bank of the river without firing a shot. But the French, alarmed at the advance, quickly threw reinforcements into the lines and checked the British advance, in the meantime, the 1st Division having crossed at a ford higher up the river, and driving the enemy opposed to them from their posts, joined the 5th Division and completed the capture of the position. Major T. Willshire, of the 38th, in

Crossing the Bidassoa.

(1) Battle Honours, British Army, p. 184.

Digitized by Google

command of the Light Companies of his Brigade, was the first man to cross the Bidassoa.

The year 1814 found the 38th in France, for after clearing Spain and Portugal of the enemy, Wellington was pushing on to what became the crowning victory of Waterloo. But there was still much fighting to be done, and the 38th, by the addition of new drafts from home, were up to full strength again, and took part in the five days' battle of the Nive, December 9th to 13th, 1813. They were still in the 5th Division when they drove the enemy from their entrenched positions on the heights of Iruse, and continued in pursuit, and, fording the river, took up a position on Mayor's House.

The Battle of The Nive, 1814.

On the advance of the Army on the 9th December, the Regiment was hotly engaged in drawing the Tirrailleurs, when Lieut. Hopper received a dangerous wound through the body from a musket shot, Major Taylor was severely wounded with Lieut. Willcocks, while 41 rank and file were killed and died of their wounds. The following days the Regiment also suffered severely. During the progress of operations in France they were engaged in the investment of Bayonne, from whence the enemy made a sortie at 3 a.m. on the morning of April 14th. Lord Muskerry, who was Field Officer, acting with great promptitude, detached Captain Forster with a party of the 38th to a house in front, and from the gallant conduct of the officers and men all efforts of the enemy to take it were unavailable. Colonel Lloyd of the 38th was wounded, and the British loss was considerable.(1) "That a greater disaster did not ensue," is attributed by Napier, "to the gallant defence of this house by Captain Forster and the men of the 38th."

This was the last episode of the Peninsular War. Captain Forster was mentioned in despatches and was awarded a Brevet majority. The 38th returned to Ireland in May, 1814, and was quartered at Cork, where the 2nd Battalion had been disbanded and absorbed into the strength of the 1st Battalion, and the Regiment became again a single Battalion Regiment.

38th Peninsula Battle Honours.

For their fighting in the Peninsular War the 38th added nine Battle Honours to their list, viz.:—

ROLEIA, 1808.	SALAMANCA, 1812.
VIMIERA, 1808.	VITTORIA, 1813.
CORUNNA, 1809.	ST. SEBASTIAN, 1813.
BUSACO, 1810.	NIVE, 1814.
BADAJOZ, 1812.	

and also earned the right to the distinction "PENINSULA,

(1) In the four days' battle of the Nive, the 38th's casualty list was 4 officers wounded, 12 men killed and 90 wounded.

Digitized by Google

1808—1814" in commemoration of their battles with the French in Portugal, Spain and France.(1)

Napoleon was now an exile in the island of Elba, from which he made his escape in March, 1815. Landing in France on 13th March, he again made a bold attempt to regain the position he had lost. The 38th were ordered to the Netherlands, and, arriving at Ostend from Ireland, were immediately sent to join Lord Wellington's Army, but they arrived too late to take any part in the battle of Waterloo, and formed part of the Army of Occupation of Paris. During their stay in Paris, Major T. Willshire served as Brigade Major under Sir C. Greville, who introduced him to the Duke of Wellington, and recommended him for promotion. Willshire was appointed A.D.C. to the Duke, and on the 4th December 1815, he was gazetted Brevet Lieut.-Colonel for his distinguished services while in command of the Light Companies of Sir C. Greville's Brigade at the crossing of the Bidassoa, and at the battles of the Nive. Returning to England in December, 1815, the 38th were quartered at Hastings and Portsmouth and later at Gloucester. The 38th seems to have always had a reputation for good conduct while in home quarters, rough soldiers as they were, fresh from a campaign where rough living and hard fighting was the rule, it speaks volumes for their discipline, when after their stay in Gloucester, the Colonel received a complimentary resolution from the Corporation praising the good behaviour of the soldiers while in quarters there. A paragraph in the Military Register, under date 6th May, 1818, records the fact that corporal punishment was unknown in the Regiment!

38th in Ireland.

The Regiment afterwards went to Ireland, and while stationed at Kinsale an amusing incident occurred, Major Willshire and Captain Evans, being considered good economists, had the lease of the Mess Committee. The Regiment in its continual movement, suffered serious losses by the breakage of glass, so these two officers decided to have a large chest made, and place each wineglass in a receptacle by itself, nicely wrapped in soft paper! They had the chest constructed in a room on the second floor of the barracks,

(1) On the 1st June, 1847, thirty-eight years after the completion of the campaign, Her Majesty Queen Victoria commanded "that a Medal should be struck to record the services of her fleets and armies during the wars commencing 1793, and ending 1814, and that one should be conferred upon every officer, non-commissioned officer, and soldier, of the army who was in any battle or siege." This Medal was known as the "Military General Service Medal." The number of Medals awarded to the 38th were as follows :—Officers, 28. Other ranks, 213. Aggregate of Clasps :—Officers, 103. Other ranks, 730. These Clasps included Roleia, Vimiera, Corunna, Talavera, Busaco, Fuentes D'Onor, Badajoz, Salamanca, Vittoria, St. Sebastian, Nivelle, and Nive.

Digitized by Google

and when the carpenters, directed by the officers, had finished their task, everyone was satisfied there would be no more breakage. But when orders came for the Regiment to move, it was found impossible to get the chest out of the room either through the door or the window! A witty Major suggested that "nothing could be too hard for the heroes of Badajoz and San Sebastian, why not make a breach in the wall?" This was done and the huge chest descended to the ground "amidst cheers from cooks, waiters, and messmen of the 38th."(1) Fearful barrack damages were threatened, but they made up the "breach" with the barrack master. This story, which is vouched for by one of Major Willshire's subalterns, reminds one of the Irish yarn of the man who built a house and forgot to make provision for a door!

Breaching the Barrack Wall.

On June 18th, 1818, the 38th, under the command of Colonel Deane, embarked at Plymouth for the Cape of Good Hope. During the voyage the ship touched at Rio de Janeiro, and the 38th disembarked and were inspected by the Emperor Don Pedro I., who was greatly struck by their smart appearance. While in South Africa, Colonel T. Willshire was appointed Commandant of what was then called British Kaffraria. The country was in a very unsettled state, and his small force of 3,000 men was scattered over a long frontier. He made his headquarters at Grahamstown, where in April, 1819, the garrison consisted only of his own Company of the 38th, 140 Royal African Corps, 100 troopers of the Cape Corps, and some artillery. About half past one o'clock on the 22nd of April, the rebel Chief Mokanna, with a force of 6,000 Kaffirs, attacked Grahamstown. Willshire's slender force was so admirably disposed that in spite of the overwhelming odds against them they completely defeated the Kaffirs, who were pursued into the bush. Following up his success, Willshire sent two columns of troops against the enemy, who, finding they had lost nearly all their cattle, and seeing that a continuation of the war would mean destruction to them, sued for peace. This was granted, and the boundary of the Colony was extended to the Keiskamma River, with the understanding that the country between it and the Fish River should remain unoccupied, except by military posts. Early in March, 1822, Colonel Willshire embarked with his regiment for Calcutta, and Lord Charles Somerset, Governor of the Cape, sent a letter to Lord Hastings, Governor General of India, greatly praising Willshire's conduct of the operations against the Kaffirs, and strongly recommending him for further promotion. On the arrival of the 38th in India Colonel Willshire, on the 10th September, 1823, was

38th in South Africa, 1818.

(1) Soldiers of the Victorian Era.

Digitized by Google

gazetted to a regimental majority, without purchase, in the 46th Regiment (Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry), and so missed sharing in the first Burmese War.(1)

The British rule of India had come into conflict with the King of Burmah in 1823, and from the Cape the 38th (South Staffords) were sent out to India to take their part in the first Burmese War. The seizure of an island on which we had formed a small military post brought a protest from the British Government to the King of Ava, who replied by threatening to invade our territory and re-annex Bengal. Several small engagements took place with the Burmese, and in one or two the British came off second best. The Government, in face of this invasion of their territory, reluctantly declared war, and it was decided to invade Burmah with four separate columns. The Expeditionary Forces were composed of British and Indian troops, under the command of Major-General Sir Archibald Campbell, K.C.B., of the 38th, an officer who had done good service in the Peninsula War. The troops comprising the main Army, the Bengal Brigade, commanded by Brigadier-General M. McCreagh, C.B., consisted of the 38th (South Staffords), the 13th (Somerset Light Infantry) and the 20th Bengal Infantry. The first Madras Brigade, commanded by Brigadier-General McBean, comprised the 41st (Welsh Regiment), the Madras European Regiment (now the 1st Royal Dublin Fusiliers), and five battalions of Sepoys, with two companies of Artillery. Serving on General Campbell's Staff were the following officers of the 38th: Captain J. J. Snodgrass, Military Secretary and A.D.C., Lieut. J. Campbell, A.D.C. (son of Major-General Sir A. Campbell, K.C.B.), and on the Staff of the Bengal Division were:

38th in Burmah, 1823.

---

(1) This distinguished soldier was born in the 38th, in which Regiment his father was serving as Quartermaster in 1790. His services with the 38th include the operations in Buenos Ayres in 1807, the Walcheren Expedition in 1809, the Peninsular War in 1809-14, in which he was twice wounded (Medal with seven clasps), and the operations against the Kaffirs in 1819. He was at the capture of Kettoor in the Dooab in 1824, and the operations in Afghanistan in 1839. He commanded a wing of the 40th Regiment at the assault and capture of Ghuznee (Medal, K.C.B., and the Dooranée Order from Shah Shoojah, King of Afghanistan), and commanded the Bombay Column of the Army of the Indus at the capture of Khelat, the capital of Baluchistan. For this service he was created a baronet, G.C.B. He died in 1862, aged 72. His Orders, medals, and other mementoes, are exhibited in the Royal United Services Institution, Whitehall, London.

Digitized by Google

Capt. H. Piper, 38th,	D.A.A.G.
Major Evans, 38th,	Commanding 1st Brigade.
Lieut. T. A. Trant, 38th,	
Lieut. G. R. O'Brien, 38th,	D.A.Q.M.G.
Capt. J. J. Snodgrass, 38th,	D.Paymaster.
Lieut. R. Ware, 38th,	Fort Adjutant of Rangoon.(1)

The Bengal and Madras troops assembled in Cornwallis Bay, in the Andaman Islands. Thence the main Army proceeded to Rangoon, whilst Brigadier McCreagh, of the 13th (Somerset) was detached to seize the island of Cheduba. On the 11th May, 1824, Rangoon was occupied after a very feeble resistance, but the town was deserted, for the Burmese had removed everything portable that was likely to be of use to an invading army. This hampered the movements of Sir A. Campbell, and as the Burmese consistently destroyed everything in their retreat our progress was slow.

First Burmese War, 1823.

After we had taken possession of Rangoon, the enemy, who had retired into the jungle, began active preparations for resisting our advance. A stockade was observed in course of erection at the village of Kemmerdine, about four miles from Rangoon, and as this would have seriously menaced the shipping in the river, General Campbell, on May 19th, sent the Grenadier Company of the 38th, under Captain Birch, with some naval men under Lieut. Wilkinson, to destroy it. This was successfully accomplished, but unfortunately, the 38th lost Lieut. Kerr and one other rank killed, and nine privates wounded.(2) The rainy season having begun added to the discomfort of the troops, who were now forced to go into garrison in Rangoon. The defences of the town were strengthened, and reinforcements awaited, before a further advance was possible.

The Burmese who had now received reinforcements, began to maintain a system of harassing attacks, cutting off stragglers, firing on the pickets, and giving the troops no rest day or night. Emboldened by their successes they gradually drew closer to the British lines, and concealed in the dense jungle which grew close to the posts, erected fresh obstacles against us.

On the 27th May, Captain J. J. Snodgrass (38th), observing the enemy a short distance in front of his post, apparently making an observation of our line, took a small patrol for the purpose of finding out their strength. He found sentries and posts regularly established, which were soon cleared, until advancing along a pathway adjoining a

(1) The Burmese War. H. H. Wilson.
(2) *Ibid.*

Digitized by Google

main road, they were suddenly fired upon from a stockade forty yards away. Luckily the enemy in his haste to get under cover, had omitted to close an opening at the angle of the stockade which Captain Snodgrass observing, ordered an immediate charge, and the small party of eighteen men of the 38th drove from a strong and well-constructed stockade at least 200 of the enemy, with a loss of only three men wounded.

Next day, Sir A. Campbell, in order to check these inroads on his position, and also to endeavour to obtain a better estimate of the strength of the Burmese forces, took four companies of the 13th and 38th Regiments, 250 Sepoys, with one gun and a howitzer from the Bengal Artillery, and advanced against the stockade captured by the 38th the previous evening. He found it re-occupied by the enemy, who fired a few shots and retired. Pushing on, about a mile further they came upon two more strong stockades not quite finished, and abandoned by the enemy, all of which were destroyed. **Jungle Fighting.**

After marching seven miles, the artillery were so exhausted that Sir A. Campbell was obliged to send his guns back to the camp, escorted by the native infantry. Determined to advance further, he took his four Companies of British Infantry towards a large plain where he was informed the enemy might be expected to stand. After a most fatiguing march through rice fields inches deep in water, and in pouring rain, the enemy was discovered in great strength at the village of Joazong, defended in front by two stockades. The attack was immediately ordered, and the stockades were carried at the point of the bayonet. A demonstration was then made against the main Burmese line, which immediately fell back, as if intending to retire to the jungle, and, as it seemed doubtful if they could be brought to action, General Campbell retired the troops back to their own lines.

In his despatch of 1st June, 1824, General Campbell writes: "Our advance was by echelon of Companies, left flank leading direct for the village, close to which a heavy fire was suddenly opened upon us from two stockades, so well masked as not to be distinguished from a garden fence even at the short distance of sixty yards. Not a moment was to be lost. I ordered Brigadier-General McBean to keep the plain with the Light Company, outflanking the stockades and village, while the other three Companies, led by that gallant soldier, Major Evans, of the 38th Regiment (South Staffords), at the head of the two flank Companies of his Regiment, and Major Dennie, of the 13th Regiment (Somersets), at the head of his Company, rushed forward to the attack, and in less than ten minutes the first stockade was cleared. The second stockade,

Digitized by Google

resolutely defended, was carried in a similar gallant fashion. The disadvantages under which the attack was made, considering the heavy fall of rain and the strength of the three Companies commanded by Captains Piper and Birch of the 38th and Captain Macpherson of the 13th, not exceeding in numbers 200 men, carrying by assault two formidable stockades, defended by six or seven times their force, and that in the face of what I have seen, I need not, I trust, endeavour to speak in praise of the gallant band I had that day the honour to command."(1) The Golden Dragon Pagoda was the key of the British position, and, on the morning of the 1st of June, it was attacked by a strong force of Burmese, who were repulsed with heavy loss.

Capture of Kemmendine.

Eight days afterwards, Kemmendine, one of the strongest defences in the vicinity of Rangoon, was captured by our troops, the 38th and 13th, in attacking the position, assisted each other up the face of the stockade, here at least 10 feet high, and carried the position at the same time that the main column, under Brigadier McCreagh, had breached the walls on the other side. Major Sale, of the 13th, was the first man who gained the top of the stockade.(2)

Later on, in November and December, 1824, it was attacked for five days by the Burmese in a desperate attempt to retake Rangoon, but owing to the splendid tenacity of the garrison, composed of British and native troops, all the attempts failed. At the same time Sir A. Campbell made a strong attack by four columns on the Burmese Army besieging Rangoon, inflicting on them a crushing defeat, and capturing over 200 guns.

During the next few months our troops suffered terribly from the climate—sunstroke, scurvy, and cholera were rampant, hundreds of our soldiers dying before the disease could be checked. Five British regiments alone buried 3,586 men in eight months. The 38th's losses from disease alone were 3 officers and 345 men.

Early in February, 1825 the British began to move up the Irrawaddy River, when the strong position of Donabew was attacked. Our attack failed from want of supports, but on April 2nd the town was occupied by us, the enemy having evacuated the place during the night, leaving all his guns and depôt of grain behind.

The Advance to Prome.

The advance to Prome was continued, and this town was occupied by the end of April, and Sir A. Campbell made it

(1) The Burmese War. H. H. Wilson.
(2) *Ibid.*

Digitized by Google

his headquarters for the summer. Bad weather then prevented further operations, but as soon as the season permitted, Sir A. Campbell, leaving a garrison at Prome, advanced against the strongly fortified post of Malloon.

In the attack on this place on the 19th January, 1826, the 1st Brigade consisting of the 38th and 13th (now only 480 strong, although these two regiments had left Calcutta with a strength of 1,800 men), under Lieut.-Colonel Sale, was ordered to attack the south-east angle of Malloon, while the other three Brigades, under Brigadier-General Cotton should cross above the town and after carrying the outworks, hem the Burmese in. The 13th and 38th embarked in boats at 1 o'clock, being covered by our artillery fire, and favoured by a strong wind and tide they passed rapidly down in front of the Burmese entrenchments, being exposed to a very heavy fire of grape and musketry. Arriving at the south-east angle, where the bank was fortunately rather high, and afforded protection to the boats from grapeshot, though they were much exposed to musketry fire. Pulling in shore the first three boats were received with a volley which disabled half the crew and wounded Colonel Sale and Lieut. Dickson of the R.E. The command then devolved upon Major Frith, of the 38th. He was wounded in the throat by a spear thrust, but the 38th and 13th, placing scaling ladders against the walls, were soon inside the fort. The Burmese did not wait to repel the attack once our men had obtained an entry, but speedily retreated in two dense columns. They were instantly pursued through the fort by the victorious 38th and 13th, but the men were so fatigued that they could not pursue the enemy beyond the west face of the stockade, from which point they kept up a heavy fire on the fugitives. The first Brigade was in possession of the town of Malloon before the whole of General Cotton's column had crossed the river, and although he disposed his troops to the rear of the town, he was too late to cut off the Burmese retreat.

The Taking of Malloon, 1826.

This was the final blow to the Burmese power of resistance. They had been so confident that Malloon was invulnerable, that on its capture they relinquished all further opposition to our troops. The town was found full of military stores of great value, no fewer than 75 cannon, 20 tons of gunpowder, 1,700 muskets and a large store of grain were captured. After the guns and ammunition had been removed the military works were destroyed and the town burned. In his despatch reporting the capture of Malloon, Sir A. Campbell wrote: "The conduct of His Majesty's 13th and 38th Regiments during the advance, and their gallantry in the storm, far exceed all that I can write in their praise. The 38th's casualty list for the whole of this campaign was 2 officers

Digitized by Google

killed and 6 wounded, 25 men killed and 130 wounded.(1) Eventually peace was signed at Ava, the Burmese capital, and the 38th, on the 24th March, 1826, returned to Bengal, where they stayed until 1836. The Burmese war gave them another Battle Honour,

BURMAH-AVA. 1824-1826.(2)

In 1836 the 38th returned to England, under the command of Lieut.-Colonel H. Piper, a gallant veteran who had served with the 38th for forty years, seventeen as a Captain, and nine in command. He served with distinction in the first Burmese War, and was several times mentioned in despatches. They were in garrison in Ireland in 1837, and in 1840 were sent to the Ionian Islands; from this date until 1851, the old 38th were on duty at Gibraltar in 1843, Jamaica in 1846, and at Halifax, Nova Scotia, in 1848. Just before they left England the command of the Regiment was purchased by Sir John Campbell, a great name in the history of the 38th, which he joined in 1821, as previously related, he was A.D.C. to his father, General Sir Archibald Campbell, throughout the Burmese War.

Central America, 1848.

While in garrison at Jamaica in 1848, a detachment of the Regiment, 300 strong, took part in a brilliantly conducted little affair in Central America. The Nicaraguan Government had been behaving badly to British residents there, and it became necessary to send a force for their protection. The 38th, under the command of Captain J. W. Smith, co-operated with a naval contingent, under Captain Loch, in the ascent in boats of the river St. Juan de Nicaragua, and took part in the assault and capture of the fort of Serapigni, and in the taking of the forts of Castillo Viego and St. Carlos. Captain J. W. Smith accompanied Captain Loch to the town of Grenada, and was present at the negotiations and conclusion of a Treaty with the Nicaraguan Commissioners.(3)

While at Halifax, Nova Scotia, a fire broke out in the North Barracks occupied by the 38th, and completely

---

(1) The Burmese War. H. H. Wilson.

(2) Silver Medals were issued for this campaign, and the 38th received :—Officers, 14. Other ranks, 107. It is known as the "Army of India Medal." A Medal called "The Ava Medal" was also given to the native troops engaged. It was struck in gold for the officers, and Sir Archibald Campbell was the only British officer to receive one.

(3) Captain J. W. Smith afterwards served with the Regiment in the Crimean War, and was at the battles of the Alma, Inkerman, the siege of Sevastopol, and at the capture and occupation of the Cemetery and suburbs on the 15th of June, 1855. He was senior officer of the 38th at the close of the war, and after commanding the Regiment, attained the rank of General. His military honours were :—Medal, 3 clasps, Knight, Legion of Honour, Fourth Class of the Medjidie, Turkish Medal, and C.B.

Digitized by Google

destroyed the buildings. All the Regimental Plate, Records, and valuables were burnt. The Regiment, having no barracks, was split up, and was billeted in Companies and half Companies all over Nova Scotia, and the adjacent islands. The Regiment returned to England in 1851, and after three years at home, embarked for Turkey under the command of Major J. J. Louth, in April, 1854, and after serving at Gallipoli and Varna, landed in the Crimea on 14th September with the 3rd Division.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IV.

SECTION II.

80th on Home Service—Reform Bill Riots—Convict Guarding in New South Wales—80th's Third Shipwreck—In India—The Sikh War—Battles of Moodkee, Ferozeshah, Sobraon—Second Burmese War.

RETURNING now to the history of the 2nd Battalion (South Staffords), the old 80th, they never had a 2nd Battalion, and during their long periods of foreign service, their ranks were chiefly recruited from the Staffordshire Militia. On the 30th of August, 1817, the War Office had fixed the strength of the Regiment to be as follows: "3 Field Officers, 10 Captains, 20 Sub-Lieutenants, 5 Staff Sergeants, 36 Sergeants, 21 drummers, and 600 rank and file." On the return of the Regiment to England in 1818, it was found that a great proportion of the returned men were unfit for further service, and they were invalided and discharged. Recruiting was actively commenced, and the Regiment soon attained full strength. From 1818 until 1820 they were on a tour of stations in England, Scotland, and Ireland. During the disturbances in Glasgow in 1819, they were employed in assisting the civil authorities to maintain order, and their conduct under these trying conditions won high praise from the Lord Provost of the city. In 1820 the whole Regiment was on garrison duty at Edinburgh Castle for three months. In September the same year they left Edinburgh and marched via Berwick-on-Tweed, Leeds, Macclesfield and Stockport, to Liverpool, and on the 24th October they embarked on seven sailing packets for Dublin. They had a bad voyage, some of the Companies did not reach Dublin until the 29th and 31st of the month, and owing to the poor accommodation on these small boats, the Regiment suffered greatly from sickness. Two days after landing the last Company, the Battalion was inspected by Sir David Baird, who expressed his pleasure at their smart appearance after such a boisterous voyage. No sooner were they in Ireland than orders were received for the Regiment to proceed to Gibraltar.

80th on Home Service.

A depôt was formed at Fermoy, and the Regiment marched to Cork, where, on the 22nd of December, 1820, they embarked for Gibraltar, arriving there on 15th January,

Digitized by Google

1821. From Gibraltar they were sent to Malta, where they remained in garrison until 1828, under the command of Lieut.-Colonel G. D. Pitt.

While at Malta the establishment of the Regiment was augmented to six Service Companies and four Depôt Companies. They were afterwards sent to the Ionian Islands, where they were employed in road making and building fortifications. In November, 1830, orders were received for the Regiment to return to England, and on the 15th January, 1831, they embarked on transports. Owing to bad weather, the transports had to twice put back into Malta, so that they did not reach Portsmouth until the 9th and 10th of March. At Portsmouth the six Service Companies were joined by the four Depôt Companies from Sunderland. The united Regiment remained at Portsmouth until May 30th, 1831, when orders were received for its march to Stafford in three divisions. **80th in the Mediterranean.**

The country at this period was in a very unsettled condition, owing to the rejection of the Reform Bill, rioting and incendiary fires were prevalent in the industrial towns. The Military forces were employed in suppressing these disturbances, and the 80th were broken up into detachments and sent to assist the civil authorities in Lancashire. They were on this duty until June, 1832, when orders were received for the Regiment to proceed to Ireland, where they remained until April, 1834. The Marquis of Anglesey was at this time Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and took the opportunity of the Regiment's presence there to inspect it. Although he had raised and commanded it, it was nearly forty years since he had last seen it. **Reform Riots.**

On the 21st April, 1834, the Regiment was in Dublin and were returning to barracks after a long day's drill, "when on passing the headquarters of Major-General Sir E. Blakeney, the G.O.C. of the Dublin garrison, that officer told Colonel G. D. Pitt that he had just received orders to embark an efficient Regiment without loss of time for England, and that he had selected the 80th, and directed Lieut.-Colonel G. D. Pitt to prepare forthwith accordingly." This was at 1 o'clock, and at a quarter to five the Regiment marched out of the Royal Barracks, and at 6 o'clock (being five hours from the receipt of the order) they were clear of Dublin Harbour!

On arrival at Liverpool, detachments were sent to Blackburn, Rochdale, Bolton, and Nottingham, where they continued on duty until October of the same year, when the detachments were recalled to Salford Barracks, where the Regiment was posted until 4th May, 1835. They then moved to Liverpool and detachments were sent to Haydock

Digitized by Google

Lodge, Wigan, and Chester. While at Liverpool orders were received early in September for the Regiment to proceed to Chatham for embarkation as convict guards in New South Wales, and the first convict guard embarked at Gravesend on May 23rd, 1836, under the command of Major N. Baker, reaching Sydney on the 12th October, 1836. Other detachments followed at intervals, the last, under the command of Major T. Bunbury, left Portsmouth on the 5th August, 1837.

Convict Guards, New South Wales, 1823.

Colonel G. D. Pitt did not go out with his Regiment, for on the 19th March, 1837, he was appointed Inspecting Officer of the Leeds Recruiting District. He had served with the Regiment for nearly eighteen years, for fifteen of which he had commanded it. In his farewell Order to the 80th, he expressed his regret at leaving "a Corps which he had commanded for so many years, and in whose welfare he feels so lively an interest. To the officers who have so well supported him in maintaining the Regiment in that high state of discipline which has uniformly called the approbation and encomiums of the many superiors under whose orders it has been placed, he returns his most grateful acknowledgments. To the N.C.O's and soldiers he has to express the infinite satisfaction which their willing obedience and steady behaviour have at all times afforded him."

He was succeeded in the command by Major (Lieut.-Colonel) N. Baker, who was then commanding the Regiment in New South Wales.

Major T. Bunbury, the junior Major, had joined the 80th in 1823 while it was stationed at Malta. He had seen considerable service in the Peninsula War, where he had held command of a Portuguese Regiment, but owing to some misunderstanding with the War Office, he was refused an appointment of equal rank in an English Regiment, and offered a Captaincy in the 80th without purchase. Subsequently, as opportunity arose, he purchased his Majority in the same Regiment.

As the various detachments of the Regiment arrived they were posted to the Penal Settlements in the Colony, while the headquarters were for a time fixed at Sydney, afterwards at Paramatta.

No more depressing duty could be found for a Regiment than this guarding of convicts, or one more calculated to destroy the discipline of a Corps. As the vessels arrived from Europe with their cargoes of convicted felons, the Military guard (generally composed of young soldiers, drafts for the regiment) was sent out into the interior in charge of road

Digitized by Google

gangs, without ever having seen, or been seen, by the major part of the officers of their Regiment. These guards, with few exceptions, were commanded by young officers without experience, and who, from want of other sources of amusement, gladly availed themselves of the society of such of the settlers who casually fell in their way, and as was only natural, insensibly acquired their habits.

The Mounted Police, formed by selecting the most active and well conducted men from the Regiments serving in the Colony, although a useful and very necessary body of men, was not regarded with favour by regiments which lost the services of good men who had so enlisted. These men might for misconduct be returned to their Corps, otherwise their appointment was permanent. The 80th furnished fifty-six men for this service.

Shortly after his arrival in the Colony, Major T. Bunbury obtained an appointment as Officer in Command of Norfolk Island, being sworn in as a Magistrate, he exercised full Military and Civil authority. The convicts he had to control were some of the worst specimens of degraded humanity, and, finding a lot of malingering among them, he, by "making the punishment fit the crime," was soon enabled to obtain better discipline.

On the 15th January, 1844, his Excellency Lieut.-General Sir M. C. O'Connell, K.C.H., commanding the forces in the Australian Colonies, was appointed Colonel of the 80th Regiment on the death of Lieut.-General Sir John Taylor, and in May the same year at the last half-yearly inspection of the Regiment prior to their embarkation for India, Lieut.-General O'Connell, who held this inspection, emphatically expressed his appreciation of the good conduct of the men during their stay in the Colony. As an appreciation of their good behaviour, his Excellency was pleased "to remit the remaining portions of the sentences of such prisoners as are under confinement by awards of Court's Martial." He hoped that this "act of grace would lead the soldiers of the Corps to merit and carry with them from this Command that reputation which their Regiment brought with it."

80th Ordered to India.

The Regiment left Sydney on the 12th of August in four divisions on board the sailing ships "Royal Saxon," "Briton," "Lloyds," and "Enmore." Headquarters were on board the "Royal Saxon," while Major T. Bunbury and Companies Nos. 2, 3, and 6 were on board the "Briton." All the transports excepting the "Briton" reached Calcutta safely, but the Captain of the "Briton," after leaving Singapore, decided to take passage through the Straits of Malacca. They had barely cleared the Straits when the wind rose to a gale,

Digitized by Google

which quickly increased to a hurricane, lasting two days, and great damage was done to the ship. The scene on board was indescribable. Everything was swept from the upper decks and all the boats smashed. Among those on board were 33 women and 45 children, who somehow managed to survive the horrors of this time. After a brief lull, the storm broke with redoubled fury, and during the darkness of the night the ship struck. Next morning, at daybreak, it was seen that the ship had been carried by a tidal wave high and dry into a mangrove swamp on the little Andaman Islands—a considerable distance from the shore. To their great surprise they saw, stranded quite near to them, a vessel they had passed in distress the previous day. This turned out to be the "Runnymede," a transport with troops for Calcutta, with men of the 10th and 50th Regiments, with their wives and children. When the weather calmed down, both ships joined forces, under Major T. Bunbury, who first saw to the comforts of the women and children, and then saw that his men retrieved all it was possible to save from the wrecked vessels. Their experiences during their fifty days' sojourn on this inhospitable island are graphically described by Major T. Bunbury in his despatch reporting on the disaster. He found it necessary to proclaim Martial Law over the little community under his charge, as protection had to be provided for the women and children. Major Bunbury's firmness and good management, aided by the other officers, kept up the spirits of the wrecked people, and the women and children were well looked after. Unfortunately, there was nothing edible on the island, and, rations beginning to run short, they managed to rig up the long boat of the "Runnymede," which they rechristened "The Hope," and on November 25th a party under Lieut. Leslie, 80th Regiment, and Captain Hall, of the "Briton," were despatched to the nearest port to report on their condition and obtain assistance for their rescue. They reached Mesgina on December 7th, and from this place Lieut. Middleton, of the H.E.I. Company's Service, sent sufficient food to last them from six to nine days. Immediate steps were taken to relieve the shipwrecked troops, and three transports, arriving at the island on December 29th, the shipwrecked soldiers and the women and children were put on board. Their troubles were now over, and on January 1st, 1845, they set sail for Calcutta, arriving there without any further mishap. Unfortunately, in addition to the privations suffered in the shipwreck, all their accoutrements and possessions had been lost, and these were not replaced until they rejoined the Regiment at Agra on the 13th April, 1845. While at Agra the 80th suffered greatly from sickness, no less than a third of the full strength being in hospital at one time. Lieut.-Colonel N. Baker, finding the climate did not

80th in Third Shipwreck, 1844.

In India.

Digitized by Google

agree with him, sold out and retired, and was succeeded in the command of the 80th by Lieut.-Colonel T. Bunbury on the 5th October, 1845. Leaving Agra on October 20th, the 80th formed part of the Army of the Sutlej. North-east of Scinde, and higher up the River Indus, lies the vast district known as the Punjab, traversed by five large rivers. This country, in 1845, was held by the Sikhs, one of the most warlike of the Indian races. On the 11th December, 1845, the Sikhs crossed the River Sutlej at a point 12 miles from Ferozepore, and invaded British India with a well-drilled and equipped army of 60,000 men, and a train of artillery second to none. This invasion of British territory brought about the Sikh War. The British forces under Sir Hugh Gough, Commander-in-Chief in India, on receipt of the news that the Sikh Army had crossed the River Sutlej and invaded British territory, commenced their advance to Moodkee, 150 miles from their stations, on the 12th December, 1845.

The Sikh War.

"The march from Umballa was throughout most harassing, at one time over heavy ploughed land, then through thorny jungle, breaking all order, then again over heavy sand. The dust was terrible, the soldiers were sometimes the whole day without food, and when their meat rations were served out there were no means of cooking them, as the cooking utensils had not come up. Yet, the troops marched bravely, though often struggling from fatigue, heat and dust. On the 18th December they arrived before Moodkee, having covered a distance of 150 miles in seven days, with little or no water or regular food, and under a sun which was hot and oppressive in the day. But the isolated position of 7,000 British soldiers at Ferozepore, with a Sikh Army of 100,000 men in the neighbourhood was a source of danger which could not be ignored." Wearied with long and incessant marching, the troops were enjoying a well-earned rest when it was reported that a large force of Sikhs was advancing upon them. Orders were at once issued to fall in, and in a few minutes line of battle was formed about 4 p.m. on the 18th.

The 80th, commanded by Lieut.-Colonel T. Bunbury, were in McCaskill's Division, and, with a Sepoy Corps, formed the extreme left of the infantry line. Their position was on a ridge of sandhills, well protected both in front and rear against a sudden cavalry attack—by masses of dense thorny plants, sufficiently strong to check a regular advance. Owing to other corps having advanced further than ordered, the position of the 80th was useless, as their fire would have swept along the line of the British front. They therefore advanced in column at quarter distance, covering the extreme left of the line. Considerable delay, and some confusion, was caused by some Native Regiments, who took it for granted that they

Moodkee.

Digitized by Google

were in the immediate presence of the enemy's cavalry, and began forming squares, thus delaying the advance.

Battle of Moodkee, 1845.

As there was danger of the Sikhs outflanking the British, owing to their longer line, which extended beyond ours, orders were given for the British cavalry to attack on both enemy flanks. The attack was brilliantly carried out; the Sikh horse at once fled and many of the enemy's guns were silenced, while the Sikh infantry were disconcerted by this manœuvre. Meantime the British infantry, advancing on the Sikh line in an echelon of brigades, by their heavy fire soon convinced the Sikhs that they had met more than they expected. The Sikhs fought resolutely and with great determination, but being steadily driven back by the British infantry, they were forced to give way, and fled in great disorder, darkness putting an end to the pursuit, and saving the Sikh Army from further disaster. The 80th lost 5 killed and 19 wounded, Lieut.-Colonel T. Bunbury being shot through the knee. After having his wound examined by a surgeon, when the action was over, Lieut.-Colonel T. Bunbury decided to try and regain the British camp, about three miles in rear. He took two wounded soldiers with him, who said they thought they could find the way back in the dark, but after going some distance they found themselves in the midst of a Sikh picket. Lieut.-Colonel Bunbury and the wounded men managed to escape during the confusion, and directing them to make the best of their way to the camp, Colonel Bunbury, who was mounted, halted in the shelter of some trees and endeavoured to ease the pain of his wound, which, owing to the restiveness of his horse, was causing him severe pain. Losing his way in the dark, he spent most of the night under the trees, but at daybreak, meeting a Sepoy patrol, he eventually reached the camp in safety. The two wounded soldiers had already reached the camp some hours before his arrival, he having been given up as lost. The success at Moodkee had enabled the British force at Ferozepore, under General Littler, to leave that place and march down to join Sir Hugh Gough's forces, which had been further re-inforced by the 29th Foot (Worcesters) and three Bengal Regiments. As a consequence the distribution of the Brigades and Divisions was modified. Sir John McCaskill having been killed at Moodkee, the 80th were now brigaded with the Worcesters, and the 41st Native Infantry, under Brigadier Taylor, in the 2nd Division, under General W. R. Gilbert.

At 2 a.m. on the 21st December, 1845, the troops were called to arms in perfect silence, "without beat of drum or sound of bugle," and at 4 a.m. the march to Ferozeshah began. For eleven hours they marched, suffering severely from thirst

Digitized by Google

and other privations, the distance being twenty-three miles. Finding that the Sikhs were entrenched in position at Ferozeshah, the troops were halted, and had their breakfast, Sir Hugh Gough riding forward to make a personal survey of the enemy's position.

At about 1 p.m. Sir John Littler effected his junction with the main forces, having accomplished his withdrawal from Ferozepore with great skill and entire success. General Gilbert's Division, which included the 80th, was on the right of the British front, and at 4 p.m. the action was begun by artillery fire, the infantry lying down. The attack was then pressed on the right, the 80th and the 29th Regiments leading. Both Regiments extended their lines in prolongation of each other, and, cheering each other on, undismayed by shot and shell, carried the Sikh battery in gallant style. While in the battery the 80th received severe losses. The Sikhs, many clad in chain armour, others rolled up in their razias (a sort of quilted cotton rug used as bedding), and feigning death, these men sprung up directly our men had passed and attacked them in rear. The 80th quickly recovered from their surprise, but not before Captains Sherberras and Best had been killed at the head of their men, while Lieut.-Colonel Bunbury had his horse shot under him. It soon became apparent that the Sikh artillery was greatly superior both in number of guns and heavy metal, and as the day was closing, our artillery advanced closer, supported by the infantry. Night fell on a scene of great confusion. On the extreme right, Gilbert's Division had carried the Sikh entrenchments, on the left Littler had been repulsed, and in the centre Sir H. Smith's Division had borne away to the left and was cut off from the main body. Men and officers were worn out with fatigue, and chilled with the bitter cold of a Punjab night. It was impossible to light fires without drawing down the fire of the enemy, who were much elated at the result of the engagement, and who, throughout the night, kept up an incessant artillery fire on our bivouac. One heavy gun in particular caused especial annoyance, and Sir Henry Hardinge called upon the 80th to silence it.

Battle of Ferozeshah, 1845.

"On that memorable night (December 21st, 1845) when Lord Hardinge called out '80th, that gun must be silenced' " wrote the famous Hodson of Hodson's Horse, "they jumped up, formed into line, and advanced through the darkness, and soon we lost the tread of their feet while they gradually gained the front of the enemy's battery, whose fire had caused such loss. Suddenly we saw the blaze of the Sikh battery, followed at once by a thrilling cheer from the 80th, accompanied by a murderous fire as they sprang upon the battery and spiked the guns. In a few moments they moved

80th Silence the Gun.

Digitized by Google

back silently and lay down on the cold sand, but they had left forty-five of their number and two captains to mark the exploit by their graves."

The gun silenced by the 80th was the largest gun taken during the campaign, and was twice captured by them. At dawn next day, 22nd December, Major General Gilbert, now in command of the 2nd and 3rd Divisions, acting on instructions from Sir Hugh Gough, made his dispositions for again storming the enemy's position. The left of his Division was led into action by Sir Hugh Gough, the Commander-in-Chief, and the right by Lieut.-General Sir H. Hardinge, General Gilbert himself leading the 80th Regiment. The advance was made under a heavy fire from the enemy's guns, but, nothing dismayed, the troops entered the entrenchments, capturing battery after battery at the bayonet's point. General Gilbert, in his report, states: "Although the troops under my immediate command required no stimulus to oppose the enemy, yet the presence of those two above-mentioned distinguished officers in the field of battle greatly animated them on this trying occasion. The conduct of the 80th Regiment I cannot too highly speak of."

In the two days' fighting at Ferozeshah the 80th sustained a heavy casualty list, for Lieut.-Colonel T. Bunbury, Major R. A. Lockhart and Lieuts. S. Fraser and M. D. Freeman and 75 N.C.O's and men were wounded, and the killed included Captains A. D. W. Best and R. Sherberras, Lieuts. R. D. Warren and G. C. Blythesea, and 36 N.C.O's and men, while seven men were returned as missing, supposed to be killed. Both Colonel Bunbury's and Major Lockhart's horses were shot under them.

Some time afterwards, the Duke of Wellington, when advocating long service, spoke in Parliament in high praise of the 80th. "Who," said the Iron Duke, "but old soldiers could have done what the 80th did at Ferozeshah, when they stormed at night the batteries which were plunging shot and shell into their bivouac?"

80th Earn "Immortal Fame."

Lord Wellington was not the only one to praise them for their gallant conduct, for Lord Hardinge also wrote an account of this fight, which was read in Parliament by Sir Robert Peel, in which the following passage occurs: "I found myself again with my old friends of the 27th, 31st, 50th and 9th, all in good heart, and with them that Regiment which has earned for itself immortal fame in the annals of the British Army, her Majesty's 80th Regiment." High praise, indeed! but well deserved, for it proved the value of old and tried soldiers, men who could be relied upon to successfully

Digitized by Google

undertake hazardous risks, and that they did take risks their losses showed.

After the two battles of Moodkee and Ferozeshah, the British forces were reinforced by the 10th Regiment (Lincolns), which was posted to the same Division as the 80th. Both these Regiments had served together when they were in the Ionian Islands in 1828, and much good feeling existed between them, and the Lincolns, observing that the men of the 80th were thinly clad, causing them to suffer severely from the cold nights when on picket duty, very generously provided from their own store 600 pairs of cloth trousers for them, each Company of the 10th presenting a Company of the 80th with its proportion. Such acts as these demonstrate the good feeling which existed between the two Regiments, and deserves recording. The Regiment had no part in the battle of Aliwal, but formed part of the forces which finally defeated the Sikhs at Sobraon. The Sikhs were in a very strong position, with a triple line of entrenchments at a bend of the river Sutlej, on the same side as the British, covering the ford on the direct road to Lahore. The position was a formidable one for any troops to assault, for the Sikhs mustered at least 32,000 men, with 70 guns.

What the Lincolns did for the 80th.

The 80th (South Staffords) were in Sir Robert Dick's Division, which included also the 10th (Lincolns), 53rd (Shropshire Light Infantry) and three battalions of sepoys, and in Dick's second line were the 9th (Norfolks), 62nd (Wiltshires), with one sepoy battalion. Sir R. Dick's Division was to lead the attack, while the other Divisions were to watch the fords against counter attacks, and to threaten the Sikh left above Sobraon. The attack was to have begun at dawn, but such a dense fog hung over the river that the actual advance was delayed until nine o'clock, when the three horse batteries attached to Sir R. Dick's Division galloped to the front, and opened a very heavy fire on the Sikh entrenchments. The infantry advanced steadily, and although exposed to a galling fire not a shot was fired until the first line of trenches had been carried by the bayonet. The enemy put up a determined opposition, but while our troops succeeded in carrying the enemy's flank batteries at the bayonet's point, they were brought to a halt by the fire of a battery which commanded the position they had won.

Battle of Sobraon, 1846.

Colonel Bunbury immediately wheeled three Companies of the 80th to the right flank, and, moving along the parapet, these Companies carried battery after battery in succession. The remainder of the 80th followed in with the 10th Regiment, and afterwards rejoined the three Companies detached. This movement was so important that Sir Robert Dick, the Divisional Commander, and the Brigadier, joined

Digitized by Google

Colonel Bunbury and assisted him to encourage and animate the men to greater exertions. It was at the last of these batteries that a gun, which the enemy had wheeled round to enfilade their own trenches, discharged a round of grapeshot, mortally wounding Sir Robert Dick and killing his horse. "His last words to Colonel Bunbury were: 'Bunbury, get your men together, push them a little further, and it will be sufficient.' "(1) This flank movement, which gave the 80th the enemy's batteries in succession, prevented their guns from being turned against the advanced Brigade, which first entered the entrenchments, and allowed Sir W. Gilbert's Division to effect an entry in the centre, so that the 80th contributed in no small degree to this victory over the Sikhs. The position was now carried, and the 3rd Hussars having found an entrance to the entrenchments were charging down on the enemy, driving them in confusion towards the one bridge which was their one and only chance of safety. By noon the day was ours, but our losses were heavy, the British totalling 2,383; of these, the 80th loss was 91 officers and men killed and wounded. Lieut. Crawley died of his wounds, Captain Cookson and two other officers were wounded. Other ranks, 13 killed, 74 wounded.

Sikh "Dugouts."

A remarkable feature of the Sikhs' defence was what became known in modern times as "dug-outs," these holes in the trenches, with further holes beyond, were in some cases large enough to accommodate 40 men. The men hidden in them would wait until the attacking force had passed over them, and would then attack in rear. Our soldiers having experienced these tactics at the battle of Ferozeshah, were taking no chances, but carefully dealt with these "nests" before advancing, afterwards as many as 30 to 40 dead Sikhs were found in some of them. The loss to the Sikh Army amounted to over 8,000 men and 67 guns, chiefly of large calibre.

The Governor-General of India, in his despatch referring to the action of the three Regiments, the 10th, 53rd and 80th, stated: "They advanced to the assault in spite of every impediment, cleared the trenches, and entered the enemy's camp. . . . The attack was crowned with the success it deserved, and, led by its gallant commander, Sir Robert Dick, obtained the admiration of the Army which witnessed its disciplined valour."

General Sir Hugh Gough, Commander-in-Chief Indian Army, in his despatch, dated 13th February, 1846, wrote: "We have to deplore a loss severe in itself but certainly not

(1) Reminiscences of a Veteran.

Digitized by Google

heavy when weighed in the balance against the obstacles overcome and the advantage obtained. I have especially to lament the fall of Major-General Sir Robert Dick, K.C.B., a gallant soldier of the Peninsula and Waterloo Campaigns. He survived only until evening the dangerous grapeshot wound which he received close to the enemy's entrenchments, while personally animating by his dauntless example the soldiers of H.M. 80th Regiment in their career of noble daring."(1) This decisive defeat brought the first Sikh War to a conclusion, and ten days later the Sikh capital, Lahore, was in British hands, the 80th being the first British Regiment to enter the town and form part of its garrison. For the part they played in this war the 80th added three Battle Honours to the Colours of the Regiment:

MOODKEE (1845), FEROZESHAH (1845), SOBRAON (1846).(2)

Colonel T. Bunbury received the C.B., and other officers and men received medals for the campaign. He retired from the command of the 80th on the 31st December, 1849, his last act being to present new colours to them. The ceremony took place in front of the European lines at Delhi, and in his farewell speech to the Regiment, he said: "To me it will be a gratifying recollection in my old age and in my retirement to claim the privilege of saying 'I, too, served with that Corps which has earned immortal fame in the annals of the British Army, Her Majesty's 80th Regiment.' "(3)

Presentation of New Colours, 1849.

He was succeeded in the command of the 80th by Lieut.-Colonel Robert Blucher Wood, C.B., who was severely wounded at Ferozeshah, for which he received the C.B., and retired in 1852.

Still in India, the 80th served through the second Burmese War of 1852-53. The King of Burmah was continually violating the Treaty of 1826, and his arbitrary seizure of the persons and property of British merchants, no less than his insolent replies to protests from the Governor-General of

(1) Digest of Service. 80th Regiment.

(2) For the Second Burmese War, the 80th were awarded Medals with bars, for the three battles of Moodkee, Ferozeshah and Sobraon. The Medal bears the inscription: "To the Army of the Sutlej," and is the first Indian Medal issued with bars. The ribbon is dark blue edged with dark crimson.

(3) His service with the 80th Regiment was 28 years. He published a Memoir of himself, entitled "Reminiscences of a Veteran"—in three volumes—which is admittedly the most readable and trustworthy military history of the times, covering the period from the Peninsular War, in which he served, to his retirement from the command of the 80th.

Digitized by Google

India, made it necessary for the British Government to take steps to uphold the dignity of the flag.

Second Burmese War, 1852.

Early in 1852 an army of five brigades, commanded by Lieut.-General Godwin, was organised. The 80th, commanded by Lieut.-Colonel G. Hutchison, were in the 2nd Bengal Brigade, commanded by Brigadier-General T. Dickinson, and on April 19th Rangoon was captured. Part of the 80th, under Major Lockhart, two Companies of the 18th (Royal Irish Regiment), and some Native troops formed the storming party in the attack on the Great Dragon Pagoda. The distance to be covered in the advance to the eastern entrance of the Pagoda was about 800 yards. The troops crossed steadily under a heavy fire from the walls crowded with the enemy. When the storming party reached the Pagoda steps, a rush was made for the upper terrace, and a deafening cheer told that the Pagoda was won. The enemy evacuated the place in great confusion, and were severely handled by the troops and the fire from the steamers on the river.

The 80th, during the fighting round Rangoon on the 11th, 12th and 14th April had a small casualty list: Lieut. J. L. W. Hunt, wounded; 1 N.C.O. killed, and 25 other rank wounded. But the climate proved a greater enemy to the troops than the Burmese, for during the months of April and May the 80th lost 43 men from cholera and dysentry, including Major Lockhart and Paymaster Hunt. A detachment of the Regiment, under Captain Ormsby, took part in the assault and capture of Pegu, returning to Rangoon on June 8th, 1852.

Attack on Prome, 1852.

From this period until September, 1852, arrangements were being completed for an advance on Prome, some 300 miles up the Irrawaddy River, and on the 16th September a force of 2,000 men, including the 80th, embarked on steamers for Prome. On nearing the city, the squadron came under the enemy's fire, which was returned, the ships anchoring, and covering the landing of the 80th under Lieut.-Colonel G. Hutchison. At 4-30 p.m. the landing was effected. The enemy occupied a fine position on a range of hills covering the town, about 1,000 yards from the point of landing. The 80th were exposed to a smart musketry and jingal fire, but Captain Christie, with the Grenadier Company, advanced at the double towards the large Pagoda occupied by the Burmese, while another party, consisting of two Companies of the 80th, under Captain Walsh, attacked on the left, and, in the words of General Godwin's despatch, "most gallantly drove the enemy out of their position with the loss of only one man killed and a few wounded." The 80th retained possession of the Pagoda during the night, and next morning the rest of the troops were landed, only to find the town and hills beyond it abandoned by the enemy.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

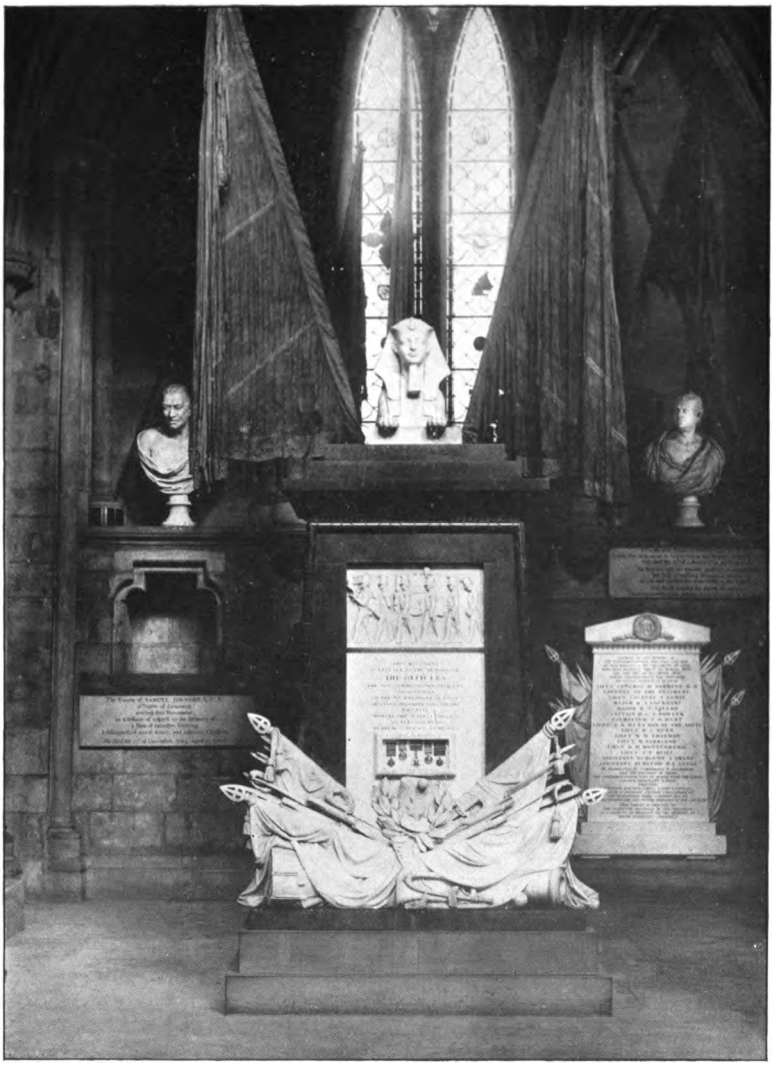


Photo. *J. P. Jones.*

80TH SIKH WAR MEMORIAL, LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL.

PLATE 3. *To face p. 65.*

UNIV. OF MICH.

Digitized by Google

The 80th remained at Prome for some months, and during this period a new draft from England arrived to strengthen the Regiment. In charge of the draft were two Ensigns, Garnet Wolseley and Wilkinson. Soon after their arrival, the new draft was engaged upon the attack and capture of Donabew, where both Ensigns were severely wounded. Ensign Garnet Wolseley showed himself possessed of determined gallantry and resource. Both he and Ensign Wilkinson were mentioned in despatches, but it is not every Ensign that is fortunate enough to secure a "mention" in despatches in his first action.

Ensign Garnet Wolseley at Donabew.

At the termination of the war, the 80th were sent down the Irrawaddy to Rangoon, where it took over its former duties of guarding the Great Dragon Pagoda, which duties were performed until the Regiment re-embarked for Calcutta. About a week before embarking, a certain company of the 80th formed the Pagoda Guard, when the idea was conceived of bringing home some trophy. As the Pagoda contained a great number of bells, weighing from one to 40 or 50 cwt., the second smallest was selected (weighing about 200-lbs.). It was noiselessly unscrewed, lowered from its high position, and then carried secretly during the night to the camp, where it was buried under a tent until opportunity offered to conceal it in the company's arm chest, in which it was subsequently conveyed to Calcutta. The bell was missed the next morning by the Burmese worshippers, and a searching enquiry was made, but the old guard of the 80th held their tongue, and the Army Prize Agent gained no scent.(1)

80th Secure a Trophy.

The Regiment's casualty list for the second Burmese War was 5 officers killed and 4 wounded, 4 men killed and 40 wounded. The old 80th returned to England in June, 1854 and were quartered at Portsmouth. Though numerically weak, they gallantly volunteered for the Crimean War, but were not accepted. While at home, they were in garrison at Aldershot and in Scotland, and in the spring of 1855, while the 2nd K.O. Staffs. Militia were in training at Stafford, they sent a detachment from Scotland to Stafford to present to the Corporation the bell they had captured in the Great Dragon Pagoda at Rangoon. The presentation took place on Tuesday, March 28th, 1855, at a public dinner given by the Mayor (John Henson Webb, Esq.), to which a general invitation to the officers of the 80th had been given, but owing to the Regiment being then quartered in the North of Scotland, only the officer in charge of the detachment (Major Ormsby) attended.

Presentation at Stafford, 1855.

(1) Hist. of Stafford, p. 76.

Digitized by Google

At the dinner, Major Ormsby, in presenting the bell to the town, said: "It might not be uninteresting to mention that on the occasion of casting such a bell as that he was presenting to the town the inhabitants of the place as well as the surrounding villages for miles round would attend, and while the metal was in a state of fusion the Burmese women of all ranks, walking round in procession, would throw into it their personal ornaments which they had worn, of gold, silver, and brass, according to their station in life, and the whole being fused together was offered in the shape of a bell to the deity Gedama, whose votaries they were."

The bell is a fine specimen of casting, composed principally of silver. It is 18 inches in diameter, and has an inscription in oriental characters round it. It now does duty as the Borough fire-bell.(1)

Old Colours at Lichfield Cathedral.

The old Colours of the 80th were brought to Stafford at the same time, and the interesting ceremony of "Trooping the Colours" was performed by the Militia on their drill field. Afterwards, the old Colours were taken to Lichfield and placed in the Cathedral. The Colours which replaced these old ones were also placed in the Cathedral at Lichfield in 1872.

For their services in the second Burmese War the 80th bear on their Colours the Battle Honour:

PEGU, 1852-53.(2)

In 1850 a handsome monument, surmounted by a large marble sphinx, to perpetuate the memory of their gallant comrades who fell in the Sikh War, was erected in Lichfield Cathedral by the survivors, with three colours taken from the enemy at Ferozeshah suspended over it. The medals and honours won by Colonel T. Bunbury, C.B., are affixed to the monument in a glazed receptacle. The ceremony of unveiling the monument was fittingly performed by the old Marquis of Anglesey, then a Field-Marshal, who had raised the Regiment.

In 1856 the 80th were sent to the Cape, under Lieut.-Colonel G. Hutchison, and were stationed on the Eastern frontier

---

(1) *Staffs. Advertiser*, 11th March, 1855.

(2) The Medal issued to commemorate the Second Burmese War is now known as the "India General Service Medal, 1854." The ribbon is crimson with two dark blue stripes. This same Medal was issued for the subsequent campaigns in India, with the addition of a bar to mark the engagement. The bars granted to the South Staffordshire Regiment for this Medal are as follows:—

PEGU, 1852-3. 2nd South Staffs. Regiment (80th).
NORTH-WEST FRONTIER. 1st South Staffs. Regiment (38th).
BHOOTAN, 1864-66. 2nd South Staffs. Regiment (80th).
PERAK, 1875-76. 2nd South Staffs. Regiment (80th).

Digitized by Google

during the threatened eruption of the Kaffir tribes, which made that year memorable in Frontier annals. It was one of the first regiments despatched from the Cape on receipt of tidings of the Mutiny. It went to Ceylon first, and afterwards to India.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER V.

SECTION I.

38th in Crimean War—Indian Mutiny—England, Egypt, 1881-84—The River Column—Kirbekan—Boer War—South Africa. 1854—1914.

THE war in the Crimea was due quite as much to the misunderstanding of England's attitude by the Emperor Nicholas of Russia, as to the lack of plain speaking on the part of a British Ministry. Both sides were equally to blame, and Britain, to quote a celebrated diplomat's remark, was "backing the wrong horse" when she, in supporting Turkey, joined hands with France, and despatched a Naval and Military Expedition to the Crimea.

This campaign is remarkable for two things. It was the first in which the whole of our infantry were armed with a percussion arm in place of the old flint lock "Brown Bess" as it was called, and secondly, it was the first compaign in which a body of lady nurses was organised for service in Military Hospitals. The sick and wounded in the hospitals at Scutari, near Constantinople, had been subjected to needless suffering from lack of proper management, until Miss Florence Nightingale, a lady of gentle birth, with a body of trained and volunteer nurses, arrived on the day of the battle of Inkerman, and introduced a new system, which ended in effecting a complete revolution in the art of nursing.

It was also the first campaign in which Officers and men were authorised to accept and to wear Foreign Medals and Decorations; and lastly, it was to recognise the bravery of subordinate officers and men in the campaign that the decorations of the Victoria Cross and the Distinguished Conduct Medal were instituted.

38th at Varna.

On the outbreak of the Crimean War, the 38th embarked at Portsmouth on 27th April, 1854, for active service in Turkey. They served at Gallipoli and Varna until September, while the expeditionary force was being prepared for transfer to the Crimea. Colonel J. J. Louth was in command of the Regiment, he having succeeded Sir John Campbell on his promotion to Major-General and the command of a Brigade.

Digitized by Google

While at Varna the Horse Guards Authority issued an Order authorising the wearing of moustaches. And about the same time the men were allowed to discontinue wearing the tight leather stocks, which were worn round their necks. It having been discovered that, trussed up as they were in tight coatees and stocks, the men were quite unable to march any distance in the intense heat. The men also had issued to them white covers with neck-flaps, to be worn over their shakos as a protection from sunstroke.

On August 10th, 1854, a great fire broke out in Varna, the origin is unknown, but it is alleged that it was the work of incendiary Greeks. The fire lasted for 10 hours and destroyed the greater part of the town. The 38th was the only English Regiment near the town, and it marched in and helped the French and the Navy to fight the fire. A party of volunteers from the Light Company of the 38th went to the top of the magazine, which was surrounded by fire, and was only saved by wet blankets hauled up by this party, and spread over the roof and walls.

The 38th formed part of the 3rd Division, commanded by Lieut.-General Sir Richard England. They were in the 5th Brigade, under Brig.-General Sir John Campbell (their old Colonel), the three Regiments comprising the Brigade being the 4th (King's Own), 38th (South Staffords) and the 50th (Royal West Kent).

When the preparations were completed the troops embarked in transports for conveyance to the Crimea, the 38th being on board the Troopship "Apollo." At Varna the 38th suffered less from cholera than almost any regiment in the forces, so that when they landed in the Crimea their strength was some 800 men.

The Allied armies arrived at the place of disembarkation, near the Old Fort, on the shores of the Crimea, a few miles from Sevastopol, at break of day upon the 14th September, 1854, and before night they succeeded in landing nearly all their infantry and part of the artillery. A bad swell setting on shore made landing difficult, and bad weather interfered with the landing of the remainder of the troops, but the operations were completed by September 16th.

38th Land in The Crimea, 1854.

No tents were landed with the infantry on the first day, and the troops on shore had to bivouac in the open, with only their blankets and greatcoats for protection against the storms which beat upon them, soaking them through and through. A foretaste of the rigours they had to endure, largely as a result of the action of the War Office authorities, who neglected to provide the army with the thousand and one requisites

Digitized by Google

necessary for troops waging war in such a climate as a Crimean winter.

A glance through the pages of the "Illustrated London News" for the years 1854-5, recalls the horrors our brave soldiers had to endure during those two awful winters in the trenches. The ships in the harbour of Balaclava are shown covered with ice, and the army in makeshift shelters on the frozen ground, men only partially clothed and illclad for such a climate. The hospitals were in an equally bad condition, the only relief being the sketch of "The Lady of the Lamp," Florence Nightingale, as she passes down the hospital ward carrying a lamp in her hand, cheering the sick and wounded lying in their cots. But in spite of all their sufferings the bravery of the men was superb, while their cheerful endurance showed once again the indomitable spirit of the British soldier when on active service. Soon after landing on the Crimea came the battle of the Alma. Here the Russians were in a strong natural position, occupying the crest of a range of hills dominating the valley of the Alma river, their front being covered by one or two redoubts, which fortunately for the Allies, the Russians had made no serious attempt to strengthen.

Battle of The Alma.

The 38th, commanded by Colonel J. J. Louth, although actively engaged in the battle, were fortunate in having no casualties. Their Division was in support of the 2nd Division, but owing to General England's excessive caution, they were kept too long and too far behind their leading Division to be of much service when the order to advance was given.

Colonel Louth writing home to his family, bitterly complained of the delay and inaction which deprived the 38th of their share in the Russian defeat. The advance was continued, and about the beginning of October the 38th were encamped outside Sevastopol. Immediately the Regiment was encamped, Lieut.-Colonel J. J. Louth, with much forethought, made the men build themselves huts and drain the ground on which their camp was pitched. Owing to this wise provision the 38th suffered less sickness than other Regiments during the fearful winter of 1854.

All through the winter the hardships the troops before Sevastopol had to endure were terrible. There was no hard fighting, only piquet work in the trenches, and fatigue parties for carrying stores and making new works, etc.

Still in the Third Division, they were engaged in the battle of Balaclava on October 25th, but this was really a Cavalry battle, the services of the Infantry not being needed, for only one Infantry Regiment, the 93rd (Argyll and Sutherland

Digitized by Google

Highlanders), were engaged. Both the Heavy Cavalry and the Light Cavalry Brigades were engaged in this battle, and the work of both Brigades has been immortalised by the late Lord Tennyson, Poet Laureate.

The battle of Inkerman was fought on the 5th November, 1854, the Allies had now invested the city of Sevastopol, and their lines extended from Balaclava Harbour on the right, to Straleska Bay on the left, immediately in front of the town. The British forces occupied the position in front of Mount Inkerman, and the Russian plan of attack was to make a grand attack on the British lines and occupy them effectively, while a simultaneous assault from the city should be made on the French lines, who, it was naturally supposed, would detach a large portion of their army to our assistance. The attack was made in the early morning, in a dense fog, and our men were surprised in the trenches, Regiment after Regiment were hurried up from the camp and came into action without any regard to Brigades or Divisions, for the Allies were not only surprised, they were out-numbered, the forces engaged being 8,500 British, 7,500 French, against 42,000 Russians. After a terrific struggle, the Russians were driven back with terrible slaughter, "the fire of those of our Regiments which were armed with the 'Minié' rifle doing fearful execution in the dense columns of the enemy." **The Battle of Inkerman.**

During this battle the 38th remained in reserve and on guard with the other Regiments of the British camp.

Then followed months of awful privation in the trenches in front of Sevastopol, varied by occasional sorties by the Russians.

On the 21st December, 1854, the Russians made a sortie on an advanced trench held by the 50th Regiment—which was suffering severely—when two Companies of the 38th, under Lieuts. R. H. Gordon and Brooksbank, were sent to their support. These two Companies attacked with such spirit that they succeeded in driving back the enemy with great loss. As a reward for this success Lieut. R. H. Gordon was promoted Lieut. and Brevet-Captain in the Coldstream Guards for his gallant leading. The detachment lost 4 men killed in the attack. **Counter-attack by 38th.**

The Camp of the Division was over 5 miles from the port of Balaclava, and all the stores had to be carried up by the men. Horses and carts could not be used owing to the terrible state of the roads. Rain and frost, and constant traffic had made them impassable for vehicles.

Digitized by Google

Each two men of the fatigue party was provided with a long pole, on which was slung ammunition, barrels of water, or whatever had to be carried.

The work of these parties is described by the late W. H. Russell, the "Times" correspondent in the Crimea:—"The duties of the fatigue parties are very trying. They have a tramp of about five miles from the Commissariat Stores at Balaclava to the Headquarters. I have seen the Officers dividing the labour with their men; and as I was coming in from the front on Saturday, I met a lad, who could not long have joined, in charge of a party of the 38th Regiment, who took the place of a tired man and struggled along under his load, whilst the man at the other end of the pole exhausted the little breath he had left in appeals to his comrades. 'Boys, boys, won't you come and relieve the young Officer?' Horses cannot do the work for they cannot keep their legs, and now almost every 100 yards of the road is marked by a carcase."

Winter Privations of 38th.

One night in January, 1855, the 38th were sent to relieve another Regiment in the trenches. It was bitterly cold, heavy snow on the ground, and occasional snow falling. Before leaving the parade, Colonel Louth addressed the men, telling them what he intended to do in case of attack that night, finishing his talk by saying:—"If you will only attend to these instructions I've no fear of your doing the business well, and the deuce is in it if we don't polish off those Russians handsomely." The men cheered him and marched off in the finest spirits, ready for anything. Fortunately they had a quiet night, for as Colonel Louth wrote in a further letter home—"It was so bitterly cold, that though they might have fired the charge then in their muskets, I doubt if they could have loaded again."(1)

On the 18th June, 1855, the French made an assault on the Malakoff—a strong Artillery position. The 38th on that day formed part of a Brigade of the 3rd Division under General Eyre; and Colonel Louth was ordered to advance on the Cemetery of the town, to the left of the Redan. Passing along the ravine, the Brigade gallantly carried the Cemetery after some sharp fighting, and penetrated into the suburbs of Sevastopol. During the whole of this eventful, and for the Allies, disastrous day, this Brigade of the 3rd Division remained in possession of the suburbs, but owing to the lack of supports, it not being considered advisable to retain it; after nightfall, the troops were withdrawn while the 38th were in the suburbs. Colonel Louth, who had fearlessly exposed himself, was wounded in the head by the explosion of a shell. He

Attack on the Cemetery, Sevastopol, 1855.

(1) Memoir. Colonel J. J. Louth, C.B.

Digitized by Google

was taken into a house and his wound dressed, but while lying there another shell burst in the room, killing Lieut. Davis and a corporal, wounding 4 other ranks, and striking Colonel Louth on the right leg just above the knee, cutting through the large muscles. Sergeant M'Fadden and others of his men bound up the Colonel's leg with their neck-kerchiefs, and volunteered to carry him to a place of safety in the trenches, but were unable to do so for nearly two hours. Eventually they managed to carry him nearly half a mile over open ground, through a terrific fire, fortunately without further injury. A surgeon dressed his wounds, and he was carried up to the camp, for a few days his wounds showed signs of healing, and it was decided that he should be invalided home. He left Balaclava in the transport "Hansa," but owing to the bad accommodation on board, he gradually got worse, and on arrival at Portsmouth was almost at his last gasp. His relatives were able to obtain his removal from the pestilential cabin where he had been confined, but within half an hour of his landing Colonel Louth passed away in peace.(1)

Colonel Louth Wounded.

The command of the 38th was then taken over by Lieut.-Colonel J. Sparks, who, on the morning of the memorable 18th June, was the senior unwounded Officer of the Brigade at the close of the action. He afterwards became a General, and died in 1881, Colonel of the 38th Regiment, in his eighty-second year.

The total casualties of the 38th in the Crimean War were 3 officers killed and 43 other ranks; 7 officers and 210 other ranks wounded.

They added to their Battle Honours:—

ALMA. INKERMAN. SEVASTOPOL.

They were not one of the fortunate Regiments who obtained the newly instituted decoration of the Victoria Cross, but had their share of other Decorations, for the following Officers received the "Legion of Honour," presented by the French Government, viz.: Lieut.-Colonel J. P. Sparks, Major Hume, Major Daniell, Captain Dickens and Lieut. Elles. While Sergt.-Major John Scott also received it for gallantry during the attack on the Cemetery.

---

(1) In recognition of his services in the Crimea, Colonel J. J. Louth was appointed A.D.C. to H.M. Queen Victoria, promoted to full rank of Colonel, and received the C.B.

Digitized by Google

The Regiment in addition received the following other foreign Decorations:—12, The Medjidee (Turkish); 6, Sardinian Medals, and 9, French War Medals.(1)

The 38th returned to England on July 21st, 1856, and were quartered at Aldershot, they took part in the review before H.M. Queen Victoria on 12th August, 1856, in the Long Valley, Aldershot, and on 22nd August moved to the Curragh Camp, Ireland. While here, the Regiment during the months of March and April, 1857, was employed on Election duty in the West of Ireland.

38th in Indian Mutiny.

In consequence of the outbreak of the Indian Mutiny the 38th on 30th July, 1857, embarked at Cork, with a strength of 1,052 all ranks, under the command of Lieut.-Colonel T. C. Kelly. They reached Calcutta on November 16th, and the various detachments assembling at Raneegunj, the Regiment, by forced marches, reached Cawnpore in time to take their share in the overthrow of the Gwalior contingent on December 6th, 1857, and on the 18th December the 38th joined the Column under Sir Robert Walpole, K.C.B., in pursuit of the rebels. In January, 1858, part of the Regiment was sent with the Column for the relief of Agra, and escorted the families which had been shut up in the fort down country.

On the 15th February, 1858, the 38th formed part of the force under Sir Hope Grant, and assisted in the capture of Meangunge, which was stormed on February 23rd. Sir Hope Grant then moved to join the main army under Sir Colin Campbell, which was about to advance for the final capture of Lucknow.

The operations for its capture may be said to have begun on March 2nd, when about daybreak Sir Colin Campbell, with

---

(1) The Medal issued to commemorate the Crimean War was of silver. On the reverse, a figure of Victory crowning a Roman warrior with a wreath; the word "Crimea" is inscribed vertically on the left of the figure. The bars are very ornamental, in the form of oak-leaves with acorns. The ribbon is light blue with pale yellow edges.

The 38th gained three clasps:—Alma, Inkerman, Sevastopol.

The following officers of the 38th received the King of Sardinia's Medal:—Lieut.-Colonel J. P. Sparkes, Brev.-Lieut.-Colonel W. J. Loftus, Lieuts. C. W. Gaynor and A. J. Ewen, and Privates P. McGuire and T. Reynolds.

The French Medal for "Valeur et Discipline" was awarded the following:—Sergt.-Major P. M'Fadden, Sergt. A. Clarke, Corpl. T. Brennan, Privates J. Walsh, R. Longheed, M. Murphy, B. Newhall, W. Moore, and J. Blackmore.

The Distinguished Conduct Medal, instituted during this campaign, was awarded to the following N.C.O.'s and men of the 38th Regiment:—Sergt. J. Neil; Corporals I. Baker, H. Cross, J. Husband, A. McGhie; and Privates J. Bell, W. Bradley, J. Campbell, J. Cosgrave, W. Hannon, J. Howell, R. McCorry, J. Murray, M. Smith, and R. Wise.

Digitized by Google

the 2nd Division, and a strong force of Cavalry and guns, marched on Dilkusha Park. The 2nd Division comprised the following troops:—

3RD INFANTRY BRIGADE. GENERAL GUY.

The Border Regiment.
The 38th (South Staffs. Regiment).
The Shropshire Light Infantry.

4TH BRIGADE. GENERAL ADRIAN HOPE.

The Black Watch.
The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders.
and 4th Punjab Rifles.

In this advance the 38th formed part of the advance guard, and on arrival at Lucknow took up a position in front of the Dilkusha Park.

The final siege of Lucknow lasted from March 2nd, 1858, until its capture by the British on March 21st.

Capture of Lucknow.

Sir Colin Campbell began his attack by driving in the advanced posts of the rebels, and capturing the position of Muhamhed Bagh. During the next two days the British batteries forced the rebels to retire their guns further to their rear, and on the morning of the 5th, Sir Colin Campbell, having received reinforcements, ordered two pontoon bridges to be thrown across the River Gumti, near to Bibiapur, and directed Sir Henry Outram to cross to the left bank of the river with a strong force of Cavalry and Artillery, and Walpole's Division. His place being filled by the 4th Division on the right bank.

For three days, Outram drove the rebels from point to point, until on the 9th, he was able to make his attack on the enemy's position on the left bank of the river, driving them everywhere back with heavy loss. By this action the rebel position was completely taken in reverse, and the hostile batteries on the other side of the river were enfiladed.

As soon as Sir Colin Campbell knew of Outram's success, he immediately launched his attack against the rebel forces on his side of the river, by the evening of the 13th all the greater buildings on both sides of the river had been captured, and the next day, 14th March, the important position of the Kaiser Bagh, in front of the residency, had been taken by storm. It was here that the 38th distinguished themselves in storming the works and driving the mutineers from their position.

On the 16th March General Outram crossed the River Gumti with the 5th Brigade, and joined the Commander-in-Chief at the Kaiser Bagh. While Walpole's Brigade was left to watch

Digitized by Google

the stone and iron bridges across the river, the main forces pushed on driving the rebels from position after position, until on March 21st the final capture of Lucknow was completed, those of the enemy who had not been killed seeking safety in flight.

The 38th received the Battle Honour

LUCKNOW.[1]

for their achievement at the Kaiser Bagh. Their casualties for the Indian Mutiny were, 3 officers wounded, 1 man killed, and 22 wounded.

After the fall of Lucknow the 38th were posted to Brig.-General Horsford's Brigade, and formed part of the field force, which, under Major-General Sir S. Hope Grant, K.C.B., was engaged in rounding up scattered bands of the rebel Sepoys. They were engaged at Nuggar on 12th May, 1858, and lost 13 men from sunstroke alone during the day.

38th in India.

After the suppression of the Mutiny, the 38th continued to serve at various stations in Bengal for fifteen years, under the command of Lieut.-Colonel F. A. Willis, C.B. On the 7th December, 1871, the 38th embarked at Bombay on board H.M.S. "Euphrates," and sailed for England, arriving at Portsmouth on 10th January, 1872. Lieut.-Colonel S. Henning, C.B., now held command of the Regiment. He retired in 1877 and was succeeded by Lieut.-Colonel W. K. Elles. The Regiment was quartered at Dover, Aldershot, Gosport and Manchester until 28th July, 1877, when they moved to Ireland and were quartered in Dublin.

In July, 1878, Lieut.-Colonel W. K. Elles was appointed to the Staff at the Horse Guards, and he was succeeded in the command of the 38th by Major W. de W. R. Thackwell. In July, 1880, the Regiment moved from Ireland to Malta, and were quartered in Floriana Barracks.

38th becomes the 1st Battalion The South Staffordshire Regiment, 1881.

On the 11th April, 1881, a War Office General Order was issued which completely altered the title, facings and constitution of the old 38th Regiment. The 38th (First Staffordshire Regiment) was linked with the 80th (Staffordshire Volunteers), the former becoming the 1st Battalion The South Staffordshire Regiment, while the latter became the 2nd Battalion. Under this new system one Battalion remained at home and furnished drafts for its linked Battalion serving abroad.

---

(1) The 38th were awarded the Indian Mutiny Medal, with the bar "LUCKNOW." The ribbon for this Medal is scarlet and white in alternate stripes, two of scarlet and three of white.

Digitized by Google

On 7th July, 1882, the 1st Battalion received orders to embark for the East, and next day embarked on board H.M.S. "Northumberland" for Cyprus, where it arrived on July 13th. It was commanded by Lieut.-Colonel P. H. Eyre, and its strength was 804 of all ranks. On the morning of 15th July the old 38th left for Port Said, but next day its destination was altered to Alexandria, where it arrived on 17th July, ready to take its share in suppressing Arabi Pasha's rebellion in Egypt.

When Arabi Pasha raised the standard of revolt in Egypt the 38th was the first British Regiment to land in Egypt, and for about ten days it was placed in a very critical and difficult position. The (38th) 1st South Staffs. Regiment and 3rd Battalion King's Royal Rifles held the town of Alexandria, which was in a terrible state of disturbance, many Christians being massacred during the riots, while the whole force of Arabi Pasha's Army was only twelve miles away. Fortunately the Egyptian Army did not attack the town, but contented itself with small affairs of outposts. Picked men of the South Staffords and King's Royal Rifles were formed into a body of Mounted Infantry under Captain Hutton, and were employed on patrol work, and on 22nd July took part in the first skirmish of the war, in connection with the destruction of the railway on the Ramleh Isthmus. This reconnaissance was completely successful, and there were no casualties. Lieut.-Colonel W. de W. R. Thackwell, 38th Regiment, commanded the British Infantry in this attack.

War in Egypt, 1882.

On reinforcements arriving in August the 38th was posted to the 4th Brigade in the 2nd Division, and on the 5th August a reconnaissance in force was made from Alexandria to Mahalla, under Lieut.-Colonel Thackwell. This force was used to demonstrate against Arabi Pasha, and draw his attention from Sir Garnet Wolseley's landing at Ismailia. The reconnaissance was entirely successful, the 38th had only one man wounded, "he was shot through the cheek but went on fighting as if untouched."

38th at Alexandria.

They remained at Alexandria until the close of the war. Lieut.-Colonel Thackwell, acting as Brigadier, commanding the Ramleh Field Force. Beyond affairs of outposts the South Staffords had no further part in the war, but a troop of Mounted Infantry were present at the Battle of Tel-El-Keber, where Arabi Pasha was finally defeated, on 12th September, 1882, and they were among the first troops to enter Cairo. The South Staffords formed part of the Army of Occupation, being quartered at Cairo most of the time.

The services of Lieut.-Colonel Thackwell and Lieut. A. G. Chesney were recognised—both being mentioned in despatches—and Colonel Thackwell received the 3rd Class Medjidie

Digitized by Google

Medal and Bronze Star, and Lieuts. Chesney and C. O. Hare the 5th Class Medjidie Medal and Bronze Star, while Majors P. H. Eyre and J. Alexander received the 4th Class Osmanieh.(1) Early in 1883 Lieut.-Colonel Thackwell went on halfpay, and Colonel C. Elmhurst, C.B., assumed command of the 1st Battalion.

From Alexandria the 1st South Staffords moved to Malta on 12th May, 1883, where they remained until the outbreak of the war in the Soudan in 1884, when they were ordered again to Egypt, reaching Cairo on 29th February, 1884.

The War in the Soudan, 1884.

The suppression of the insurrection of Arabi Pasha in Egypt was the prelude to a series of battles on the Nile and in the Soudan. While Arabi Pasha was attempting to procure for himself the kingdom of Egypt, a new star had arisen in the Soudan, The Mahdi. This new candidate for the sceptre of the ancient rule of the Pharaohs, called himself the prophet of the All-Powerful and leader of the Faithful. Fanatic that he was, lowly born, and a man who, in his youth, was a builder of boats on the Nile, he was shrewd and capable, he quickly realised that the emotional nature of the Sudanese could easily be attuned in religious matters, and therefore set himself to the capture of Egypt, the Soudan first. He raised the sacred banner in the wilds of the Soudan and men flocked to his standard. At first his success was slow, but eventually he defeated Hicks Pasha and other lesser men; and from being unknown in 1880, by 1884 he had not only won renown as a conquering prophet in the Soudan, but had managed to arm his soldiers with 20,000 captured rifles.

The defeat of Hicks Pasha, and the utter rout of his army, proved to the Home Government that operations on a large scale would have to be adopted before order could be restored in these outlying districts of Egypt. The outlying garrisons were withdrawn, and this convinced the tribes who were supporting the Mahdi of their power and his influence.

His victorious career speedily brought to his banner the whole of the Arab tribes in the Soudan; and the Home Government decided to send General Gordon to Khartum to endeavour to restore order.

General Gordon left London in January, 1884, and on reaching Cairo he set out for Khartum; but the trouble had then become serious, for not only was the Mahdi triumphant, but his success had fired the ambition of a lesser star in one

(1) The Khedive issued a Bronze Star, which was awarded to every officer and man serving in the war. The ribbon for this Star is navy blue.

Digitized by Google

Osman Digna, who raised the banner of revolt in the Eastern Soudan. This was a serious menace to the security of Egypt, but the British Forces on the spot dealt with Osman and completely defeated him at Tamai.

Meanwhile Gordon had reached Khartum, and found the situation bad. Mahdism was in the ascendant, and help for Gordon was far away. While Osman Digna was being defeated, Gordon was trying to organise the shattered remnants of his Egyptian army at Khartum. He advised an advance on Berber across the desert, as it would convince the Arabs we could march anywhere, under any conditions, and would help us to follow up the heavy blows already struck at Mahdism by the defeat of Osman Digna.

Gordon realised that unless some action of this kind was attempted he was liable to be cut off and isolated at Khartum. The General Officers in Egypt made preparations for an advance from Suakin, but the Home Authorities hesitated, and delayed the advance. At the end of March serious news came from Khartum, but instead of the Home Government attempting to advise the Generals on the spot to make an immediate advance, they decided to wait, and ordered the Generals back to Suez.

As time went on Gordon's position became worse, Khartum was cut off from Sennaar, and Shendi had fully risen. In May Berber had been captured by the enemy. Again the question of a relief force was raised, again there was delay; but in August, 1884, Parliament at last voted £300,000 for an expeditionary force to relieve Gordon. Kitchener was sent to Dongola to report on the situation, and his report must have been forcible for the relief column was ordered. General Lord Wolseley, G.C.B., was given command, and his Staff was composed of some famous Generals who had served him well in previous campaigns—Buller, Harrison, Wood, Wilson, Stewart, Maurice, Brackenbury, Grenfell and others.

Expedition for Relief of General Gordon.

These men knowing what was at stake, moved with great rapidity, they had ever before their eyes the lone figure of Gordon, isolated at Khartum, waiting, waiting always for the relief which never came.

Lord Wolseley made his base at Korti, and there collected his forces for the advance on Khartum. The general idea of the advance was to send a couple of columns, one of which was to cross the desert, the other to move by the river. Sir Herbert Stewart commanded the Desert Column which moved from Korti to Metamneh.

The River Column was under the command of Major-General Earle, and was to deal with the tribes on the way up who had

Digitized by Google

prevented communication with Gordon. Its movement was from Korti to Berber, and it was to establish at the latter place with General Stewart's column, and form a general base for the advance on Khartum under Lord Wolseley. In January, 1885, the River Column boarded its boats and left Korti behind. The Column under General Earle was constituted as follows:—

"A Squadron of Cavalry,
1st Black Watch,
1st South Staffordshire Regiment (38th),
Gordon Highlanders,
Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry,
One Battery, and a Camel Corps."(1)

When all was ready, the 1st South Staffords, the Battalion which had ascended the river in whalers, led the advance up the river.

The Ascent of the Nile.

General Brackenbury had accompanied them in their advance from their start from Gemai dockyard, above the 2nd Cataract, and had congratulated Colonel Eyre (commanding the 1st South Staffords) upon the strange chance which had given him, as the head of the Column, a boat bearing the No. 38, the old number of his Regiment. General Brackenbury remarks:—"Knowing what a keen soldier he was, I was glad to have him with me now."(2)

The journey up an unknown river presented difficulties almost insurmountable, no survey of the river had been made, and no maps were available, the 1st South Staffords leading, had to bear the brunt of the difficulties that faced them, and well they acquitted themselves. Owing to insufficient supplies their boat gear was sadly reduced by journey up the river, only 8 oars and 2 poles for each boat. The 1st South Staffords' supplies of food were taken by the Desert Column, and they only had 30 days boat rations to carry on with. The scarcity was great in other things besides food, for General Brackenbury, in a memorandum to Colonel Eyre on 26th December, 1884, writes, authorising an issue of soap:—"In this and in every similar issue, you must impress upon your men the necessity of economy. They have many weeks, probably some months, of work yet before them, and supplies are limited in quantity."(3)

On Sunday, 28th December, 1884, at 2 p.m., the South Staffords, 545 of all ranks, entered their 50 boats. The

(1) "The River Column," General Brackenbury.
(2) *Ibid*, p. 5.
(3) *Ibid*, p. 6.

Digitized by Google

General Officer Commanding had issued orders previously to the following effect:—"From the time of leaving Korti the Company will be the unit by which the boats will work. The utmost efforts must be made to keep the Companies together. In every case an officer will be with the last boat of the Company, and it will be his duty to urge on and assist where necessary any boats of his Company which may be falling behind."(1)

Thirty-one minutes after starting the 1st South Staffords had their last boat under weigh, quick work, for this was the first time a whole Battalion had moved together, and as it was the first forward movement beyond Korti it was full of interest. The Cavalry and Camel party followed the boats along the river banks, flinging out scouts to protect the progress of the flotilla against attack from the banks. The General and his Staff followed in the steam launch "Monarch" and overtook the Staffords at 5 p.m., 25 miles from Korti. At this point the Staffords were engaged for three days in conveying stores from Shoona across the river, completing their work on New Year's Day, 1885. The troops had only 30 days' rations, and the South Staffords, who had already been 20 days on the route, replenished their stores from the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, who had joined up with them. They, in turn, had to fill up from the West Kent's, who had halted at Abu Dom.(2)

The lack of provision for the troops was deplorable, the forward Battalions had to draw from the Reserve Battalions as they arrived, and the Reserve had to get it how they could, mostly by raiding the native villages and stores of the enemy.

Through the Cataracts.

When the River Column had concentrated on Hamdab, a start was made at 7 a.m. on January 24th, the South Staffords still leading in the boats. The river was very difficult, rapids and shallows made progress very slow, the river was full of sunken rocks and the boats had to be unloaded and the stores carried along the banks, while the boats were hauled up through the rapids, and damages repaired as they went along; the best progress they could make was about eight miles in 12 hours. Finally after great difficulties, the Staffords completed the passage of the Cataract and concentrated at the advanced post, and on January 27th the 1st South Staffords and the Black Watch were advanced about a mile short of Kab el Aba Cataract, where Headquarters joined them.(3)

The next day the two Regiments passed through the Cataracts and advanced two miles from last camp. The

(1) "The River Column," General Brackenbury, p. 7.
(2) *Ibid*, p. 59.
(3) *Ibid*, p. 84.

Digitized by Google

position was bad for bivouac, but the advance was continued, and in spite of difficulties of rapids and bad water, which made advance of only a mile or two possible, the Regiments arrived at Birti, where they went into camp at Gamra. Here they got into touch with the enemy. Half the Black Watch were in the advance to Gamra in the Radami Cataract. Headquarters and mounted troops were employed on the river banks. The 1st South Staffords and the remaining half of the Black Watch, with the Artillery, were supporting the convoy at Gamra, the remainder of the troops being at Warag, following up the advanced column. Five companies of the Staffords were delayed in negotiating the rapids and only arrived at Birti after twelve hours of unremitting toil.

On the 4th February, in the morning, six companies of the Staffords were sent on by the river, their advance being covered by the mounted troops on the river banks.

The leading companies arrived at the camp selected by Colonel Butler, which he christened " Castle Camp," at noon. During the day the Black Watch concentrated at Birti, they had been four days in the Cataract, seven miles in length, working from dawn till dusk. The last two companies of the Staffords were also kept at Birti, five of their boats being in need of repairs. The whole force was ordered to advance to Castle Camp by February 5th, but not to go beyond until Colonel Butler had reported result of his reconnaissance.

Fall of Khartum, 1885.

On the 5th February a cipher telegram was received from General Evelyn Wood, who was acting as Chief of Staff in place of Sir Redvers Buller, as follows:—"4th February, 8.50 p.m., I am ordered by Lord Wolseley to inform you that, to his deep regret, Khartum was found by Wilson to be in possession of the enemy. Wilson in returning was wrecked, but steamer has gone for him, and there is no apparent danger for him. You are to halt where you are until further orders."(1)

The news that Khartum had fallen and that Gordon had died a hero's death on the steps of the Palace in the city, cast a deep gloom over the Expeditionary Forces.

The enemy, emboldened by their success, and knowing of Gordon's death, advanced to meet the British Forces, and battle was offered at Kirbekan.

"The enemy stood between General Earle and the important post of Abu Hamed, which at least must be taken and held for

(1) "The River Column," General Brackenbury, p. 127.

Digitized by Google

the retirement. The plan decided upon was to deliver a frontal attack against the ridge which ran at right angles to the Nile, and to march round the position with the main body, take the enemy in the rear, and cut off his retreat."

On February 9th General Earle was in close touch with the enemy, and at daybreak on the following morning two companies of the 1st South Staffs., the Camel Corps and Alleyne's guns began the first attack of Kirbekan Ridge. Meanwhile the main bodies of the Black Watch and South Staffords made the flank march from the river. On leaving the Zareba this force marched along a succession of nullahs with high sandy banks, which hid the march from the enemy, who could not spot them, because the false frontal attack lay between them and the march.

When the Column had reached its objective it passed behind a covering ridge of sand, and turned back towards the Nile. It thus cut across the enemy's line of retreat. The enemy was beaten before he realised what had happened, for he only discovered the flank march when he was cut off, but he put up a fierce resistance. He was caught like a rat in a trap, for his escape by the river was blocked, as well as his way to the desert.

Defeat of the Arabs at Kirbekan.

The furthermost rock-covered spur at the river flank of Kirbekan Ridge was the first to be assaulted. Three hundred of the South Staffords and the Black Watch rushed these rocks and killed or dispersed the enemy. The main body was now ready to assault the chief line, and as it deployed, the Arab Forces, led by a Standard-bearer, left its line and charged upon the South Staffords and the Black Watch. The shooting of the British troops stemmed the Arab attack, and with a rousing cheer Scots and Staffords were battling with the cornered foe. Short and sharp work with the bayonet enabled the British to win the whole Ridge, the fight was fierce and stubborn, and the Arabs died game, but they could not stand against the onslaught of the British troops.

Unfortunately, the South Staffords lost heavily, for Colonel Eyre was killed, and two other officers, Captain Horsbrugh and Lieutenant the Hon. Colbourne, were wounded, but survived, while 5 men were killed and 22 wounded. General Earle, the Commander of the Forces, was also shot dead by an Arab as he was giving orders for clearing a hut where a number of the enemy were holding out against the attack.

Although this position had been won at great cost there was still the Ridge on the flank to be secured, where some companies of the Staffords were still fighting, and the Battalion was united to sweep the Ridge, supported by the Black Watch,

Digitized by Google

the Staffords cleared the Ridge and the position was won. Thus they added two Battle Honours to their already long list:—

KIRBEKAN, 1885. THE NILE, 1884-85.(1)

Death of Colonel P. H. Eyre.

By the heroic death of Colonel P. H. Eyre, the Staffords not only lost their Commanding Officer, but the British Army lost a distinguished soldier, who was an exceptional figure in Regimental history. He was an Irishman of good family—the Eyre's of Eyre's Court, Co. Galway. He enlisted in the 38th Regiment in 1850, and was promoted from Sergeant to Ensign in August, 1854, after less than four years service in the ranks. He served with the Regiment during the Crimean War, before Sevastopol, and through the Indian Mutiny. He was Adjutant to the Battalion for four years, and was promoted Captain in 1862, Major in 1876, 2nd Lieut.-Colonel in 1881, and commanded the Regiment from November, 1882, until his death at its head at the battle of Kirbekan. He was succeeded by Lieut.-Colonel Beale.

Afterwards it became known that the Desert Column had won at Abu Klea, and gained the Nile again, and how a party had gone ahead on the river from Metamneh only to find that Gordon was no more.(2) Too late! the tragedy of Gordon's death had been enacted while his deliverers were almost knocking at the gates of Khartum.

The Army was retired down the Nile into Egypt, and fourteen years later saw the conquest of the Soudan, and the final overthrow of Mahdism by that brilliant soldier, the late Lord Kitchener, whose conquering troops held a service in Khartum over the spot where Gordon fell. From Egypt the 1st South Staffords were moved to Gibraltar in June, 1886, and during this year the old Colours of the 38th, thought at that time to have been those carried through the Peninsular War, but long lost sight of, were found at Patshull Hall (at one time the residence of a former Colonel of the 38th), and were restored to the Regiment by the late Earl of Dartmouth. They were shortly afterwards placed in Lichfield Cathedral.

Old Colours in Lichfield Cathedral.

The Colours which had been borne by the Regiment in the Crimean, Indian Mutiny, and Egyptian Campaigns were also afterwards placed in the Cathedral. In 1896, however, other Colours came to light, which had been in the possession of the Miles family, and these are now thought to be the Peninsular Colours, and those deposited in the Cathedral in 1886 are

(1) The following men of the 1st South Staffords received the D.C.M. for this campaign:—Privates W. Asbury, J. Burke, and J. Barber.

(2) "The River Column," General Brackenbury, p. 152.

Digitized by Google

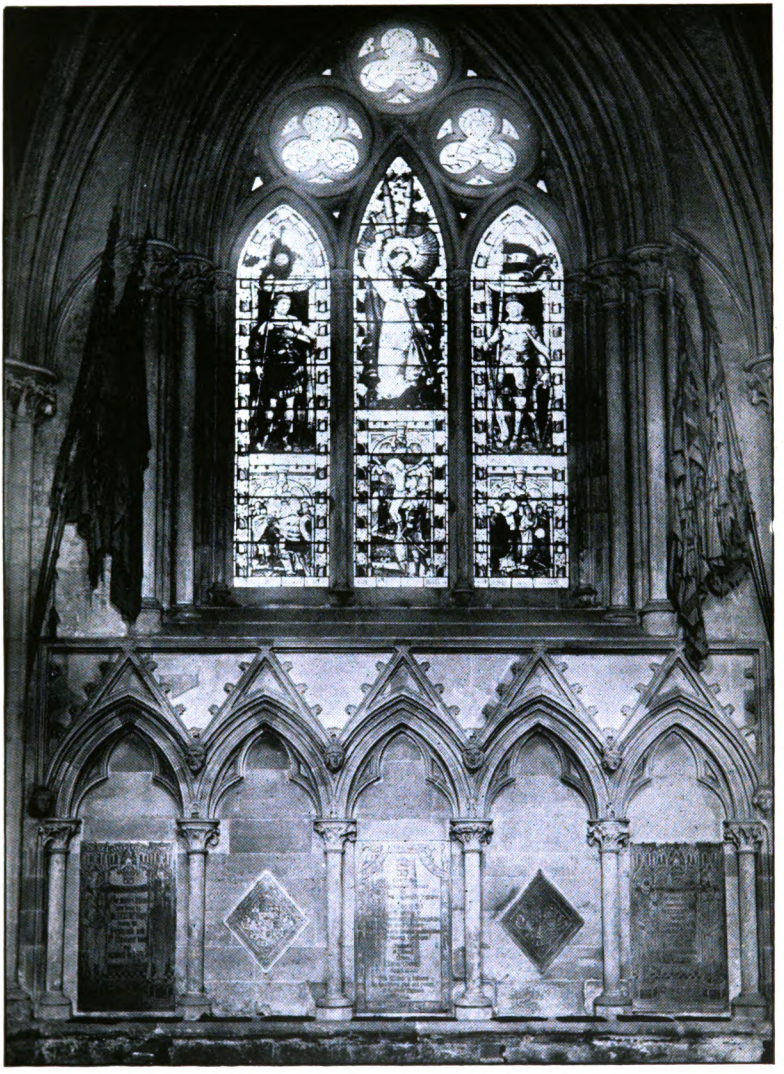


Photo. *J. P. Jones.*

38TH MEMORIAL WINDOW, LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL.

(The Colours on the left were borne in the Burmese and Egyptian Wars. Those on the right are the Peninsula Colours.)

PLATE 5. *To face p. 84.*

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

supposed to be the Colours presented in 1824, carried by the Regiment in the Ava Campaign, and withdrawn in 1839, being replaced by the Crimean Colours.

While at Gibraltar, on January 5th, 1887, the 1st South Staffords had new Colours presented to them by General the Honble. Sir A. E. Hardinge, K.C.B. The Regiment was paraded on the Alameda, and having saluted the old Colours, formed a hollow square. A pile of drums having been made, the new Colours were placed on them, and the Bishop of Gibraltar performed the ceremony of Consecration. After the service General Sir A. E. Hardinge took the Queen's Colour and handed it to Lieutenant Steward, who received it kneeling, and then handed the Regimental Colour to Lieutenant Wolferstan, who received it in a similar manner. The National Anthem was played by the band, and the General made a brief speech, alluding to the services of the Regiment. Colonel Pringle, commanding the Regiment, replied, and the Battalion reformed into line, and a March Past and General Salute terminated the proceedings. The Colours borne in the recent Egyptian Campaign were deposited in Lichfield Cathedral on July 24th the same year. These new Colours were fitted to the old Peninsula staves, making the third set borne on them. In March, 1889, Lieut.-Colonel A. Saunders assumed the command of the 1st Battalion, on the retirement of Lieut.-Colonel Sir N. W. D. Pringle, Bart.

Presentation at Gibraltar, 1887.

In 1891 the 1st Battalion moved from Gibraltar to Egypt, under the command of Lieut.-Colonel W. G. Thomas, and in July of that year the new Magazine Lee Metford Mark I. rifle was issued to the Battalion. Shortly before the 1st Battalion returned to England in 1893, the 2nd Battalion (old 80th) arrived in Egypt, and for the first time the old 38th and the old 80th met each other.

In 1894 the 1st Battalion took part in the manœuvres on Cannock Chase, Staffs., and afterwards went to Lichfield, after an absence of 100 years. Lieut.-Colonel W. G. Thomas retired in 1894, and was succeeded by Lieut.-Colonel A. B. Horsbrugh.

At Home, 1894.

The Regiment celebrated its 190 anniversary with due ceremony at Lichfield, where it had been raised in 1705. They were in Ireland in 1898, Gibraltar in 1899, from whence they proceeded to South Africa, under the command of Lieut.-Colonel H. C. Savage.

On the outbreak of the South African War the 1st Battalion was quartered in Kinsale, Ireland. It received orders to move to Gibraltar, and was quartered there until January, 1900, when orders were received for the Regiment to return to England and mobilise for active service in South Africa.

Digitized by Google

They landed at Southampton on February 9th and proceeded to Aldershot. Here they were posted to Brig.-General Boys, 17th Brigade of the 8th Division, commanded by Lieut.-General Sir Leslie Rundle, and sailed for South Africa on March 17th. The 1st Battalion had a strength of 25 officers and 1,049 men, under the command of Lieut.-Colonel H. C. Savage.

South Africa, 1900.

The S.S. "Aurania" reached St. Vincent, Cape Verde Islands, on March 28th, but owing to a case of measles on board was placed in quarantine. Thus the regular coolies were not allowed on board to coal the ship, so the N.C.O.s and men of the 1st Battalion set to work and coaled the ship, enabling it to get away in two days instead of having to wait three weeks. They arrived at Cape Town on April 8th, leaving for Port Elizabeth next day, where they disembarked and went into camp. There were two casualties from pneumonia during the voyage out.

On April 15th the 1st South Staffords entrained for the front and moved to Edenburg. The men travelled most of the way in open trucks, and owing to the heavy rains they suffered great discomfort.

Next day (owing to lack of transport they had to leave all tents and extra blankets, etc., behind) they marched first to Reddisburg, thence to Rosendale, and on April 19th the 1st Battalion acted as escort to a convoy of supplies to Orlogis Post, where it joined the 8th Division.

Next day, April 20th, after a march of 25 miles, the 1st Battalion took part in its first action in the war at Wakkerstroom. The 8th Division was engaged here for three days. On April 24th the 8th Division made a wide turning movement to Dewetsdorp, and were placed on half rations. On the Boers retiring from Dewetsdorp the 8th Division advanced to Thabanchu.

The following is an extract from Divisional Orders by Lieut.-General Sir Leslie Rundle, dated Thabanchu, 26th April, 1900:—

"The Starving Eighth" Division.

> "The Lieut.-General Commanding the Division wishes the troops under his command to know that he fully appreciates the efforts made by them in spite of being placed on short rations, and should the necessity arise he confidently expects that they will respond in the same manner as they did to-day."

This was only a foretaste of what this Division had to undergo in the way of short rations, for it became known as "The Starving Eighth" long before the war was finished.

Digitized by Google

It was the task of the 8th Division to prevent the Boer Commandoes operating in the district under De Wet, Prinsloo and Olivier, from breaking into the southern part of the Colony, and how the South Staffordshires and their comrades of the 8th Division performed their task is well told in the words of Sir Conan Doyle:—"Every attempt of the enemy—and there were many—ended in failure. Badly supplied with food Rundle and his half-starved host held bravely to their task, and no soldiers in all that great host deserve better of their country."(1)

The 1st Battalion remained at Thabanchu until May 7th, being frequently engaged with the enemy, and on that day they moved as advance guard of the 17th Brigade to Abraham's Kraal, and were engaged in that neighbourhood in conjunction with General Brabant's Division until 24th May, on which date the 1st Battalion was at Avondale.

On this day the 17th Brigade received orders to seize Senekal. It marched immediately with the 1st South Staffords as rearguard, and occupied the town on 26th May. The Battalion formed the garrison of Senekal until May 31st, on which date the 8th Division marched for Ficksburg.

On Trek, in Orange Free State.

The Division reached Hammonia on 2nd June, where the 1st South Staffords remained, but on 14th June they were sent to Ficksburg to reinforce the 2nd Manchester Regiment, and proceeded to place the town in a state of defence. During the time the old 38th were at Ficksburg the town was continually attacked, and during a reconnaissance in force from Willow Grange Farm Captain Grogan and Second-Lieut. Branker were killed.

On July 23rd a general attack was made from Ficksburg in conjunction with the remaining troops of the 8th Division. This engagement was maintained until 26th July, with slight loss, and the same day the Boers evacuated Commando Nek, and the Battalion marched through it and joined the 8th Division, leaving two Companies at Ficksburg, and two others to garrison various other posts.

Meanwhile the 8th Division had reached Fouriesburg, where General Prinsloo, with some 4,500 Boers was located.

Plans had been maturing to "spread the net" round this Boer Army, and on July 22nd three Companies of the 1st South Staffords were taken from the Willow Grange garrison and pushed forward to the edge of the Willow Plateau, towards July's Kraal. Every pass and strategic position was closely

(1) Hist. Boer War, Conan Doyle.

Digitized by Google

watched, and the cordon of British troops was drawn tighter. The attack on the Boer position began on July 23rd, and before noon on Sunday, July 29th, General Prinsloo and his 4,500 burghers had surrendered unconditionally. After this surrender the Battalion, with the 8th Division, left the Brandwater Basin and marched to Harrismith, where the South Staffords bivouaced about 3 miles outside the town.

Surrender of General Prinsloo.

On August 9th the Battalion (with 17th Brigade) proceeded on trek again, moving in the direction of Simpson's Store, Molin River. By this time the boots and clothing of the Regiment were in a terrible condition, many of the men being forced to make kilts out of their blankets and wrap putties round their feet. They were frequently on short rations, the ration issued consisted of one lb. uncooked flour and one and a half lbs. of meat, but as there was no opportunity or material for cooking the flour it was invariably wasted.

Dusty, dirty, ragged and hunger-stricken, the men were a striking spectacle to the inhabitants of the district they traversed. They arrived at Reitz on August 14th, remaining there until the 20th, when they moved out and occupied Vrede on August 27th. While here, on September 3rd, new clothing and boots arrived for the Regiment, and the men were refitted.

On Trek again.

They were on trek again next day, and with the 17th Brigade occupied Bethlehem on September 11th, the 1st South Staffords being engaged with the Boers at Brockhurstfontein and Doomberg on September 17th with slight loss, and on the 22nd September General Rundle ordered the Battalion to escort a convoy of prisoners and loot, which had been captured at Doomberg, to Harrismith, and the 1st Battalion was given a rest there after its five months' hard work. They took their convoy safely to Harrismith, although they had occasional brushes with various parties of Boers on the march.

They remained at Harrismith until October 10th, when they marched out as escort to a convoy to Rietz, reaching that place on the 14th. Here they remained as garrison of the town until December, having frequent skirmishes with the enemy, and making raids on farms in the vicinity which were known to be occupied by any of the enemy.

Raiding the Boers.

On December 8th the 17th Brigade (including the 1st South Staffords) marched out of Reitz, with orders to clear the country of all stock, horses, provisions, etc. This force reached Senekal without opposition on December 14th. It then continued its march, on trek, reaching Winberg on December 22nd, and Stitzkop on Christmas Day. Here fresh supplies of clothing was sent for from Bloemfontein, as the men's clothing was in a terrible state, it had not been renewed since the Battalion was at Vrede.

Digitized by Google

On the 10th January, 1901, after continuous marching the 1st South Staffords entered Senekal for the sixth time. After a brief rest they were employed in driving a party of Boers from a strong position near the Zand River on January 13th, when they had three men wounded.

From this date there was severe marching and frequent small skirmishes with the enemy until the Battalion returned to Ficksburg on February 4th.

The Boer Forces were now largely broken up, and with the capture of the Orange Free State, and the occupation of Pretoria, Field-Marshal Lord Roberts gave up the command of the Forces in South Africa to Lord Kitchener in January, 1901. Before leaving for England Lord Roberts sent the following message to Sir Leslie Rundle and the 8th Division:—

> "I have most reluctantly given up my visit to Harrismith. I have been looking forward for some time past to see you and your troops, but I find I cannot now manage to spare the time to get there. . . . . I have kept careful note of the frequent marches they have been obliged to make, the incessant convoy duty, and the many difficulties they have had to contend with, and I wished so much to thank you and them all in person for the good service they have done. (Signed) ROBERTS."

Until the 6th May the 1st South Staffords garrisoned Ficksburg, placing it and the surrounding hills in a state of defence. On February 17th three Companies of the Battalion, under Captain Cuppage, were sent into the Brandwater Basin to destroy enemy supplies. They were attached to Colonel Firman's Column, and were very successful although they met with considerable opposition, and had eight men wounded. In another raid near Ficksburg, on April 24th, Captain A. T. Blackwood, and three men were wounded, and two other ranks killed. During this period the Mounted Infantry Company of the Battalion had been severely engaged in the Transvaal, at Springs, on April 9th, losing six men killed and three wounded.

Raids and Skirmishes.

On May 6th they moved into the Brandwater Basin, and on May 16th were severely engaged near Thorne Mill, near Fouriesburg, losing four men wounded.

While in this district the Battalion was continually on the move, and constantly engaged with small parties of Boers roving the country, and they had a few casualties. Finally the Column reached Harrismith on June 9th and refitted. While here Sir Leslie Rundle received a message from Lord Kitchener, congratulating him and the troops under his command, on their successful raids in the Brandwater Basin.

Digitized by Google

From Harrismith the Battalion were engaged in raids round Tweefontein and Langberg. The Mounted Infantry Company of the Battalion, which were attached to the 11th Battalion Mounted Infantry, were still operating in the Transvaal, and during this period had a severe engagement at Vereniging, in the Transvaal, losing 3 men killed and 30 missing and prisoners.

Attack on Yeomanry Camp.

On 16th July the 1st South Staffords, after continuous trekking, crossed the Transvaal border, reaching Standerton, on the Vaal River, next day. From this date until September 1st the Battalion was continually trekking in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem and Elands River, when it returned to Harrismith and took over the defences of the town. They remained at Harrismith until December 18th, when Battalion Headquarters moved to Elands River Bridge, about halfway between Harrismith and Tweefontein, where the Battalion occupied blockhouses on the line Elands River Bridge. On Christmas Day, 1901, at 2 a.m., General De Wet, with a large force of Boers, made a determined attack on Colonel Firman's Yeomanry Column which was encamped at Tweefontein. The Camp was completely surprised, and after a hot fight was captured. Colonel Firman being on short leave the Column was under the temporary command of Major Williams, 1st South Staffords, who was killed during the fight.

On General Sir Leslie Rundle hearing the firing at Firman's Camp, he sent Colonel Tudway with H Company (Mounted) 1st South Staffords, to try and help the Yeomanry, but it was too late, for on arrival it was found that the Boers were in possession of the Camp, and firing on a number of resisting Yeomen. This Company was not strong enough to save the Camp, and had seven casualties.

Reinforcements were quickly sent up from Elands River, but by this time the Boers were trekking off with their waggons to the fastnesses of Langberg, and pursuit had to be abandoned.

From reports of the survivors, it appeared that the Boers had crept up in stockinged feet and thrown themselves in overwhelming numbers on the pickets at the edge of the Camp, and before the Camp could be rallied the Boers were swarming through it, shooting down men as they rushed out, and the officers were shot down while gallantly trying to stem the tide. Major G. A. Williams was killed whilst heading a gallant attempt to charge the enemy. This little British Force, numbering less than 400 men, was overwhelmed by a Boer Force of nearly 1,500. The 1st South Staffords remained at Harrismith in the same blockhouse line until peace was declared.

Digitized by Google

The total strength of the 1st South Staffords serving in South Africa on this day was 30 officers and 1,227 N.C.O.s and men.

On April 20th, 1902, the Mounted Infantry Company of the Regiment took part in what was practically the last action of any importance before peace was signed.

Last Action of "H" Company, Mounted Infantry.

"H" Company (Mounted) was attached to Colonel Percival's 1st Battalion Imperial Yeomanry, and it was decided to attack a farm at Moolman's Spruit, near Brindisi, Brandwater Basin, where a number of Boers were reported to be sleeping. The Boers were warned of the attack, and purposely sent out a native to guide the Column over difficult ground so as to gain time and prepare an ambush. When the attack began the Boers were quite prepared, and poured a heavy fire on the British. "H" Company was in a small wood where there was absolutely no cover, and Captain Blackwood, who commanded it, was mortally wounded at an early stage of the fight. On hearing of this Lieutenant Savage-Armstrong and Col.-Sergt. Hazlewood immediately dashed out to where he was lying in front of the Company and carried him under cover. In doing this Col.-Sergt. Hazlewood was severely wounded. Pte. Partridge, who went to the Yeomanry to fetch the doctor, was shot dead. On finding that the farm could not be taken, Colonel Percival ordered the Force to retire. This was successfully accomplished, and the Column ultimately camped at Ficksburg. By a strange coincidence Captain Blackwood was killed quite close to the place where, twelve months before (April 24th, 1901), he was shot through the arm.(1)

The news that peace was declared reached the Battalion on June 1st, and on the 3rd, ten men, under Captain R. F. B. Glover, left for England to take part in the Coronation of King

---

(1) The total casualties of the 1st South Staffords in the Boer War were :—

KILLED.—Captain E. B. Grogan, Lieut. G. L. D. Brancker } Ficksburg, 25th June, 1900.
Major G. A. Williams. Tweefontein, 25/12/01.
Captain A. T. Blackwood. Moolman's Spruit, 20/4/02.
And 23 other ranks.

WOUNDED.—Lieut. G. W. R. Stackpoole and 53 other ranks.

MISSING.—23 other ranks.

PRISONERS.—9 other ranks.

DIED OF DISEASE.—90 other ranks.

Digitized by Google

Edward VII., but owing to His Majesty's serious illness the Coronation ceremony was postponed until August 9th, 1902.(1)

The 1st South Staffords remained in South Africa until the autumn of 1904, when the Regiment sailed for Ireland, landing at Queenstown they proceeded to the Curragh Camp, and were quartered there until November, 1906, under Lieut.-Colonel H. A. Raitt, C.B. During their stay at The Curragh a memorial window to the officers and men of the Regiment who lost their lives in the South African War was unveiled in Lichfield Cathedral, in January, 1905. The ceremony was attended by the officers, band and 70 men from The Curragh, and nearly 500 Reservists who served throughout the War with the Battalion, were present.

38th on Home Service.

In November, 1906, the 1st Battalion moved to England, and were quartered at Bordon Camp, near Aldershot, forming part of the 3rd Brigade, 1st Division. Whilst at Bordon the Regiment took part in the Royal Review in honour of H.M. the King of Denmark, on Laffan's Plain, on June 12th, 1907, and in the same summer they also took part, together with the remainder of the 3rd Infantry Brigade, and the Mounted Infantry School, Longmoor, in a special Field Day arranged for their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales.

From Bordon the Battalion moved to Devonport in October, 1908, being quartered in South Raglan Barracks, and forming part of the 8th Infantry Brigade, 3rd Division.

In November, 1909, on the departure of the Chinese Naval Division from Plymouth, the old 38th furnished a Guard of Honour at North Road Station, Plymouth.

Funeral of H.M. King Edward VII., 1910.

On 20th May, 1910, on the occasion of the funeral of his late Majesty King Edward VII., the Battalion moved from Devonport to London for the day, and lined the streets. Their position was in Hyde Park, just north of Apsley House.

On February 9th, 1911, the 1st South Staffords, under Lieut.-Colonel J. W. Sears, embarked at Devonport Dockyard

---

(1) Two Medals were awarded for the South African War, one, known as "The Queen's South African Medal," and the other, issued by King Edward VII., and known as "The King's South African Medal," was issued to all branches of the Service—British, Indian, and Colonials, including doctors and nursing sisters. The ribbon for the "Queen's Medal" has two outer red stripes, two narrow blue stripes, and a central orange stripe. The ribbon for the "King's Medal" is orange, white and green in three equal stripes.

The D.C.M. was awarded to the following N.C.O.'s and men :— Sergt.-Major (Quartermaster) F. H. White. Sergt.-Majors W. Brown, A. Cooper, and A. Hazelgrove. Q.M.-Sergt. C. Belt. Colour-Sergts. A. Harry, C. Payne, G. Leonard, and J. Hazlewood. Sergt.-Instructor of Musketry J. Craddock. Privates F. Herdman and F. Titterton.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



By permission *O.C. Association.*

LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR CHARLES TUCKER, G.C.B., G.C.V.O.,
Colonel South Staffordshire Regiment.
President Old Comrades' Association.

PLATE 6. *To face p. 93.*

Digitized by Google

on H.M.T. "Plassey" for Gibraltar, and about 9.45 a.m. on the 11th, they passed H.M.T. "Soudan," in the Bay of Biscay, with the 2nd South Staffords on board, who were returning from Pretoria, South Africa, to be stationed at Lichfield. The ships passed about 200 yards distance from one another, and the men of both Battalions lined the bulwarks and cheered each other, while the bands played the Regimental marches. The 1st Battalion reached Gibraltar on February 13th, and disembarked next day, relieving the 2nd Norfolk Regiment.

On 19th October, 1911, Lieut.-General Sir Charles Tucker, G.C.V.O., K.C.B., was appointed Colonel-in-Chief of the South Staffordshire Regiment, *vice* Lieut.-General Sir G. S. Young, K.C.B., deceased.

On the 30th of January 1912, H.M. King George V. and Queen Mary, arrived at Gibraltar on their tour to the British Dominions, and next day His Majesty presented new Colours to the Battalion.

The Battalion paraded at 9.50 a.m. 31st January, 1912, and proceeded to the Alameda Parade. One half of the Battalion, 300 strong, under the command of Lieut.-Colonel J. W. Sears, with the Colours, was formed in line facing the Royal Box, this Contingent performed the Trooping Ceremony. The remaining half Battalion, under Major A. C. Buckle, together with the 2nd Lincolnshire Regiment, was formed in quarter column on the left of the line, facing inwards. At 11.30 a.m. their Majesties and suite arrived on the parade, and His Majesty having inspected the line, the "troop" commenced, and the old Colours were finally marched to the rear of the line to the strains of "Auld Lang Syne." The trooping half Battalion then formed three sides of a square and the remaining troops on parade closed in, and the new Colours were consecrated by the Bishop of Gibraltar. The new Colours were then taken by Majors R. M. Ovens and F. H. Parkin, who handed them to His Majesty, who then presented the King's Colour to Lieut. C. H. Manger, and the Queen's Cclour to Lieut. W. A. P. Foster. His Majesty then addressed the Battalion as follows:—

New Colours Presented by H.M. King George V., 1912.

> "Lieut.-Colonel Sears, Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers and men of the 1st Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment.
>
> "I am very glad to present to you new Colours, and thus to be brought into closer contact with a Battalion whose good work for the British Empire has, I think, hardly a parallel in our Military history.
>
> "By your continuous service of nearly sixty consecutive years in the West Indies you enjoy a distinction which is

Digitized by Google

"unique in the Army. Be proud of it, and do not mistake its significance. The West Indies in those days were the most valuable possessions in the World. The climate was deadly; and there was a great deal more petty fighting to be done than you are probably aware of. The work then required of you was much the same, on a small scale, as that now required of the entire Army in every quarter of the globe. You were the first to enter upon that heavy task, and since then you have well continued it. North America, Central America, South America, North Africa, South Africa, the Plains of India, and the Mountains of India; Northern Europe, and Southern Europe; Holland, The Peninsula, and the Crimea, no part of the World has come amiss to you, and you have spent abroad three-quarters of the two centuries of your Regimental life, always and unchangeably with honour.

"A Regiment's Colours no longer go into action; but they do not on that account lose their old importance. A consecrated Colour is a Sacred Emblem, to be venerated and treasured as a token of the trust to your Sovereign and your Country in you.

"It is also something more. It is the outward and visible sign of a Regiment's traditions. You have the old staves which first went under fire at Roleia, and since then have been carried through many actions and many Campaigns.

"Remembering the glorious traditions of the Regiment, I commit your new Colours with confidence to your keeping."(1)

Lieut.-Colonel J. W. Sears then replied, and said:—

"Your Majesty,

"The ceremony which is about to conclude is one, I venture to prophesy, which will ever be memorable in the annals of the 1st South Staffordshire Regiment. The honour which Your Majesty has conferred upon the Battalion in presenting it with its new Colours, is not only deeply appreciated by all ranks at present serving, but the future generations of South Staffordshire soldiers will remember what has happened on this parade to-day and look back upon the occasion with the greatest pride. It

(1) The Hon. John Fortescue, describing this ceremony in his "Narrative of the Visit to India of their Majesties King George the Vth and Queen Mary, 1911-1912, says: "The 38th, albeit a Corps of which the newspapers, and as a natural consequence, the public, knows nothing, has one of the most remarkable records of service in the Army. . . . . One could not help reflecting that if this Regiment wore the kilt the whole British Empire would ring with its fame."

Digitized by Google

"is an honour, too, which will provoke feelings of keen satisfaction in that populous and busy Midland County of South Staffordshire, the home of these N.C.O's and men.

"Your Majesty has been pleased to refer to the past history and services of the 1st Battalion South Staffordshire Regiment. It has been my privilege and good fortune to have served in two campaigns with this Battalion, and I can personally testify to its excellent fighting qualities and to its great capacity for hard work in the field.

"On behalf of the Battalion under my Command, I beg to offer you my heartfelt thanks for giving us our Colours, and for the gracious words which you have addressed to us. Under our new Colours, I assure Your Majesty it will be the object of every Officer, Warrant Officer, Non-Commissioned Officer and man, to maintain, in peace and in war, the high character the Battalion has hitherto borne, and in so doing, to show in this practical way, our devotion to our Sovereign and to our Country."

After the presentation the line reformed and the whole parade marched past, and then moved to their respective barracks. In the afternoon the Battalion lined a portion of the streets during the Royal progress through Gibraltar. Next day, February 1st, Colonel J. W. Sears was summoned on board H.M.S. "Medina" by H.M. the King, who presented a signed portrait of himself, and one of H.M. Queen Mary, to the Officers' Mess of the Battalion. His Majesty ordered Colonel Sears to express to the Battalion his pleasure at the excellent manner in which the ceremony of presenting the Colours had been carried out. Colonel Sears in a "Complimentary Order" thanked "the Battalion for the interest displayed and the work performed by all ranks, and he congratulates everyone on their success in bringing the parade on this historic occasion to such a successful ending."

Lieut.-Colonel J. W. Sears Retires, 1912.

On the 30th December, 1912, Lieut.-Colonel J. W. Sears completed his period of command of the 1st Battalion, and was given a very hearty "send off" by all ranks on embarking for England on the P. & O. S.S. "Egypt."

His farewell Order is dated, Gibraltar, 30th December, 1912:—

"FAREWELL ORDER.

" In relinquishing command after having served for more than 31 years in the Regiment I desire to convey to all ranks my appreciation of the efficiency and discipline which has been displayed by the Battalion during my four years as Lieut.-Colonel. It is a source of great satisfaction to me in taking my departure, to feel that I

Digitized by Google

leave behind, not only a feeling of good comradeship amongst all ranks, but also a determination on the part of everybody, to maintain the best traditions of the old Regiment; and by willing work and well directed effort to keep it at all times and in all particulars, to the front. I refer with pride to the many successes which the Battalion has achieved during the past four years. The high opinion expressed by the Generals at Home over the work done at Manœuvre and Drill. The increasing standard, year by year, in Musketry and other portions of the training by the Company Commanders. The excellence displayed by the men in Gymnastics. The highly satisfactory work done in the Regimental Shops. The many hard-fought wins of the Regimental Football Teams.

"These are the principal successes to which I refer, and my thanks are due to all Officers, N.C.O.s and men, who have been instrumental in bringing about these good results. For the future I can assure you that no one will follow the fortunes of the Battalion with more interest than myself, and it only remains now for me to say good-bye and to wish you all good luck and God's speed.

(Signed) G. de C. GLOVER, Lieutenant,
Adjutant, 1st South Stafford Regt."

Lieut.-Colonel R. M. Ovens took over command of the 1st Battalion on 1st January, 1913, and on the 14th January they embarked on H.M.T. "Rohilla" for South Africa. The strength of the Battalion at this date was 21 Officers and 661 other ranks, before leaving they were joined by a draft from home of 223 other ranks.

38th in South Africa.

The Battalion reached Durban on February 2nd, and disembarked next day, proceeding to Pietermaritzburg, where they remained until the outbreak of the Great War, August 4th, 1914. During the great mining strike on the Rand, in July, 1913, the Battalion furnished a detachment of 21 Officers and 437 other ranks to assist the Civil Forces, they were split up into small detachments at Johannesburg and Bramfontein, occupying the Post Office, Telephone Exchange, Railway Stations, and some of the chief mines. They remained on this duty until 5th August, 1913, when they returned to Pietermaritzburg. General O'Brien, who had charge of the troops on the Rand, in his farewell speech to the South Staffords at the new Police Barracks, referred to the reason for which they had been brought to the Rand, and intimated what would have been required of them had street fighting been continued in Johannesburg. Happily, their presence was sufficient to restore order, and there was no collision between the troops and the people.

Digitized by Google

In September, 1913, the Battalion Football Team won the South African Army F.A. Challenge Cup, defeating the R.E. team in the final. The Cup and Medals were presented to the winning team by Lady Hart, wife of Sir Reginald Hart, V.C., K.C.B., Commander-in-Chief, South Africa.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER V.

SECTION II.

80th in Indian Mutiny—Ireland—India—Expedition to Perak—The Zulu War—Ireland—Strike Duty in England—India—South Africa.

RETURNING now to the history of the 80th, they also had a share in the Indian Mutiny, serving in South Africa, they embarked from Capetown in November, 1857, for Ceylon, from whence they were conveyed on transports to Calcutta, arriving there on February 8th, 1858. On arrival they were ordered to proceed to Allahabad. On the 21st February a detachment of three Companies, under the command of Major and Brevet-Lieut.-Colonel Christie, was sent to Futtehpore, where a flying column was formed under the command of Lieut.-Colonel Christie, consisting of 2 guns, 70 men of the 8th Irregular Cavalry, 248 men of the 80th, and 257 men of the 17th Madras Native Infantry. This Force was engaged with the mutineers of the Bengal Army on March 5th at Dhana, near the left bank of the River Jumna. Lieut.-Colonel Christie found the mutineers in possession of Sirauli, a town in the Hamipur district opposite Dhana, and by a judicious advance of his Artillery, he drove the rebels from Sirauli, and set fire to the town. Unfortunately, want of boats prevented him from crossing the river in pursuit of the rebels. While Colonel Christie was engaged on this work, the remaining five Companies and Headquarters of the 80th moved to Cawnpore, leaving one Company behind at Futtehpore. On April 4th the Regiment marched from Cawnpore on an expedition into Oude, under Sir John Inglis, K.C.B., the object of the expedition being the destruction of a village called Hourah, about 20 miles from Cawnpore. The village was found to be occupied by the rebels, and was attacked and captured, but most of the rebels escaped. From this date until the 12th of June, the 80th were on escort duty twice to his Excellency the Commander-in-Chief—Lord Clyde—from Cawnpore to Futtehgar, and back to Cawnpore. Previous to the return of the Headquarters from Futtehgar the 3 Companies under Lieut,-Colonel Christie had returned to Cawnpore, and two of these Companies were attached to the Camel Corps, and did good work at the siege and capture of Calpee.

80th in Indian Mutiny, 1857.

Digitized by Google

They arrived in time to avert a disaster to the force under Sir Hugh Rose. "Nearly 400 of the 86th (Royal Irish Rifles) were *hors de combat*, the native Regiment was not much better, and thousands of yelling Sepoys were pressing on—a river in our rear—we were well nigh beaten when the Camel Corps came up, the gallant soldiers of the South Staffords and the Rifle Brigade (forming the Camel Corps), giving one of those cheers which all the World over have been heralds of British success, came on the rebels, who wavered, finally turned and fled. Pursued by the Camel Corps, with all their energy, through the ravines, where numbers were bayonetted or killed by rifle fire."

It was the Camel Corps that literally saved Sir Hugh Rose's Division. The enemy were within 20 yards of our battery and outpost tents, the latter full of men down with sunstroke, and another quarter of an hour and there would have been a massacre.

The 80th remained at Cawnpore for the remainder of the hot season, and on October 12th Headquarters and five Companies of the Regiment marched out from Cawnpore and joined a moveable Column at Nawabgunge, on the Lucknow Road, where repeated expeditions were made into the surrounding districts in pursuit of the rebels. On November 1st the 80th formed part of a Force sent to Poorwah, a native village at which a Police Post had been formed. The rebels, who were threatening its security, retired on the approach of the Column, which was joined here by another small Column of mixed troops. Colonel Evelegh, who was in command of the combined Forces, hearing that the village of Simree, about 12 miles from Poorwah, was held by a large body of rebels, marched out to attack it, and on November 9th, after about half an hour's march, the enemy's Cavalry and Infantry were observed in the jungle. Three Companies of the 80th, and two Companies of the Lancashire Fusiliers, were extended to clear the front, while the Cavalry tried to turn the enemy's flank. After about three hours' skirmishing the jungle was cleared of the enemy, and these Companies returned to the main Column, remaining with it for about an hour, when, it having been discovered where the rebel fort of Simree actually was, the heavy guns were brought up, and 2 Companies of the 80th, and 2 Companies of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, being extended, they drove the rebels through the jungle, and coming suddenly on the fort, made a rush, burst open the gate, and took possession of it, bayonetting all the rebels that were found inside. During the advance of the skirmishers they were exposed to the fire of two guns served by the rebels, but this did not deter the advance of the British. The loss of the rebels was estimated at over 100 killed. Brigadier Evelegh in

Capture of Fort Simree.

Digitized by Google

his dispatch said:—"The advance of the 80th, under Captain Young, excited my warmest approbation."

After remaining at Simree for a few days, during which the fort was destroyed, Colonel Evelegh continued his march through the surrounding district, attacking and pursuing the rebels as information was received of any bodies of them. On November 17th the Force was engaged with the enemy at Barar, where they were thoroughly routed and a great number killed, with small loss to the British. On November 24th Colonel Evelegh's Force, having joined the Force under the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Clyde, was engaged with the enemy under Beni Madhu, at Dundea Khera. The enemy were surprised near the Ganges, and lost a great number of men from being driven into the river and drowned. Beni Madhu escaped, but all his guns were captured. After this action the 80th returned to Cawnpore with the sick and wounded.

On December 1st the 80th marched from Cawnpore into Oude, proceeding by regular marches to Lucknow, and thence to Bareitch, where they joined the Commander-in-Chief on December 19th. Two days afterwards, 21st December, Colonel Christie was detached with a Column, consisting of 6th Dragoon Guards, 80th Regiment, 2 Companies of Lancashire Fusiliers, some Artillery and Irregular Cavalry. This Force engaged the rebels at Bussingpore on December 23rd, defeating them with heavy loss. Colonel Christie, while leading his men, was shot through the neck, but not seriously wounded.

The Force rejoined the Commander-in-Chief again on January 3rd, 1859, at Banke. The rebel Army was now completely destroyed, and the Army returned to quarters, the 80th to Cawnpore. From this station the right wing of the 80th was sent in pursuit of the rebel Prince Ferozeshah, a native of Delhi, but failed to overtake him. For their work during the Indian Mutiny the 80th were granted

CENTRAL INDIA

as a battle honour, and a clasp to the Mutiny Medal.

Bhootan Expedition, 1865.

After the suppression of the Indian Mutiny the 80th remained in the vicinity of Cawnpore until 1866, when it returned to England. While in India, and quartered at Dum Dum, the 80th, in February, 1865, formed part of the Bhootan Field Force, but as peace was concluded, they were not actively employed, but took part in the repairing of roads and building of huts.(1)

(1) The "India General Service Medal," with the clasp "BHOOTAN," was awarded for this expedition.

Digitized by Google

On arrival at Plymouth the 80th were quartered in various industrial centres in the Northern District Command, and on the 11th December, 1869, they embarked at Holyhead for service in Ireland, and, on arrival at Dublin, the Regiment was split up in detachments and distributed at Birr (King's County), Galway, and in County Tipperary. On 21st June, 1870, Headquarters moved to Belfast, and detachments of the 80th were posted to various towns in the North of Ireland. While here, in spite of being often required to aid the Civil Forces in local disturbances, the Regiment maintained its good name, for during its stay in Belfast its discipline and conduct was so excellent that there was nothing but good feeling between the inhabitants and the soldiers.

80th in Ireland, 1870.

In December, 1871, the 80th were under orders for foreign service, and the various detachments were brought in to Belfast to await the arrival of the 78th Highlanders, who were relieving them. The ship which brought the Highlanders did not arrive in Belfast Lough until December 20th, and then, owing to want of depth of water, had to anchor 10 miles from Belfast, nearly opposite Carrickfergus.

The arrangements for transfer were not good, only two small pleasure steamers being used by the Admiralty for the occasion, with the result that Headquarters of the 80th did not arrive alongside the troopship until after dark. The weather was stormy, and in the darkness and heavy rain only one man at a time could get on board. The other boat, with the women and families on board, went aground on a sandbank about midnight, remaining there all night, and did not reach the troopship until 2 p.m. next day. From Belfast the troopship conveyed them to Kingstown Harbour, Dublin, where the Regiment disembarked and went to Richmond Barracks. After remaining here for 12 days the 8 Service Companies embarked at Kingstown for Portsmouth, where they were transferred, on arrival, to H.M.S. "Orontes," and on Friday, 11th January, 1872, sailed for Singapore, under the command of Major and Bt. Lieut.-Colonel H. C. Smith. On arrival, two Companies, "A" and "B," proceeded to Penang, under Captain C. J. R. Tyler, and "D" Company, under Captain Tucker, was sent to Malacca. The other five Companies remaining at Singapore. Immediately before the Regiment left England, Lieut.-Colonel R. P. Harrison, who had held Command of the 80th since the 9th November, 1866, retired from service on 10th January, 1872, and was succeeded in the Command of the Regiment by Lieut.-Colonel H. C. Smith.

80th on Foreign Service.

These five Companies remained for eight months at Singapore, and on December 8th, 1872, moved to Hong Kong, where the other three Companies, who had been serving as detachments, rejoined Headquarters on 9th January, 1873.

Digitized by Google

On the news of the murder of Mr. Birch, H.M. the Queen's Commissioner for the Malay State of Perak, which occurred on 2nd November, 1875, "B," "F" and "H" Companies of the 80th, under the Command of Major C. F. Amiel, embarked on Board the P. & O. s.s. "Kashgar" for Singapore on November 11th, 1875.

The following officers were detailed:—Captain and Bv.-Major C. J. R. Tyler, Captains C. A. E. Creagh and W. Howard, Lieuts. Prior, Cole and Walmsley, and Assistant Surgeon S. L'Estrange.

Expedition to Perak, 1875.

A preliminary attack by a Contingent of Royal Engineers and the Lincolnshire Regiment on a strong stockade held by the enemy on the Perak River, having failed, encouraged the Malays to make a stand against the British. Their principal works were amidst green steamy jungle and dense mangroves that fringed the oozy bank of the stream. Against these works, on 7th December, 1875, the troops advanced and captured the stockade, only to find it abandoned by the enemy, two guns being captured.

Below Passir Sala the enemy made another stand, the troops, however, carried the village with a rush, and here were taken 6 guns, a quantity of small arms ammunition, and Mr. Birch's books, papers and personal property were recovered.

General Colborne having been informed that the rebel chiefs were at a place called Blanja, sent 100 men of the 80th, and the same number of the Lincolns, with some guns and Artillery to capture it. Three miles from Blanja the first opposition was encountered. It was a stockade artfully concealed amid the dense greenery of the jungle. Fire was returned promptly, and a Royal Artillery gun, with a Naval rocket tube was at once brought to bear on the position, which was speedily captured.

On December 17th another stockade at Kinlá was captured, and Bt.-Major Taylor (80th) remained in command of Kinlá and Blanja until January 13th, 1876, when he was relieved by the Highland Light Infantry. Fighting continued until January 21st, when the rebel Forces were completely routed. The ex-Sultan Ismail, now a fugitive, after much wandering and misery in the jungle, was captured on March 22nd, and in token of his complete surrender, laid his Royal Insignia at the feet of Major Anson, and was sent to Singapore. Thus ended the expedition to Perak. For their services the 80th (2nd South Staffs. Regiment) received the Indian General Service Medal with the clasp

PERAK,

and two brass guns captured by the Regiment are now at Lichfield as trophies of this expedition.

Digitized by Google



By permission *Illustrated London News.*

CAMP OF THE 80TH REGIMENT, ZULU WAR, 1878-79.

PLATE 7. *To face p. 102.*

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Major Amiel obtained a Brev. Lieut.-Colonelcy and Captain Huskinson, who had served as A.D.C. to General Colborne, received a Brev. Majority.

After the Perak Expedition the 80th received orders to proceed to South Africa, on arrival Headquarters were stationed at Pietermaritzberg, under the command of Lieut.-Colonel C. F. Amiel. The other detachments of the Regiment, owing to a case of measles on board, had to go into quarantine, and did not join Headquarters until some months later.

Towards the end of 1877 affairs in Zululand assumed a threatening aspect, and Sir Theophilus Shepstone, K.C.M.G., the Administrator of the Transvaal, requested the Governor of Natal, Sir Henry Bulwer, K.C.M.G., to send a force of 200 men to Utrecht as a precautionary measure; and on the 7th December, 200 men of the 80th (South Staffords) under the command of Major C. Tucker, left Newcastle for Utrecht at twenty-four hours' notice, taking with them two mountain guns. Other Officers with the detachment were:—Captain D. B. Moriarty, "E" Company; Lieuts. W. T. Anderson, A. W. Hast, A. B. Horsbrugh and 2nd-Lieut. T. E. Griffin.

80th in South Africa.

Lieut. A. W. Hast was given command of the gun detachment, composed of 25 men of the Regiment. Towards the end of December this Force was augmented by Capt. H. Vaughan and 39 N.C.O.s and men, two field guns and forty horses, R.F.A.; and 350 Officers and men of the 1st Battalion 13th Light Infantry (Somersets).

Major Tucker's Forces at Utrecht now totalled 700 of all ranks. Earthworks had been constructed and connected up with a stone laager outside the town and new wells sunk, so that a sufficiency of water was obtained for the troops.

Early in 1878 the Headquarters and "B," "C" and "F" Companies were ordered to join Major Tucker at Utrecht, but as trouble seemed to be brewing in the Transvaal this order was countermanded, and Lieut.-Colonel C. F. Amiel and half the Regiment were sent to Pretoria, where, later, they were joined by the detachments under Major Tucker from Utrecht. The Zulus, a powerful tribe bordering the Colony of Natal, under King Cetewayo, were continually violating our territory, and it was decided to undertake a campaign against them. They were the most powerful tribe in Southern Africa, and born fighters, as the Boers in the Transvaal had learned to their cost. Unfortunately we entered this campaign with our usual contempt for the Forces opposed to us.

The Expeditionary Force was commanded by Major-General Lord Chelmsford, an officer of considerable war experience,

Digitized by Google

and who had held the highest Staff appointments in India, both in war and peace. He decided to invade Zululand with five Columns. He, exercising a general supervision of the whole, but at the outset moving with the two centre Columns. Number 5 Column was commanded by Colonel Hugh Rowlands, V.C., it consisted of the 80th (South Staffords) with a number of native levies, bringing up its strength to 1,600 men with three guns. The duty of this Column was to watch the Western frontiers of Zululand, and to keep watch over another refractory chieftain, Sekukuni, who had to be dealt with later.

The 80th were located at Lydenberg, and detachments were sent out on patrol duty to various posts in the district; one, under Lieut. Hayward, succeeded in destroying a large store of mealies collected by the Zulus at Spekboom Drift. On the 27th November, 1877, the 80th concentrated at Middleberg, under Major C. Tucker, who made it his headquarters. Early in January, 1878, there occurred the disaster to No. 2 Column, under Colonel Durnford, at Isandhlwana, within the Zululand border.

No means had been taken by the other Columns to keep in touch with Durnford's, and when he was attacked by an overwhelming Force of Zulus on the 22nd January, 1879, his whole Force was practically wiped out, for the other Columns, although they heard the firing, were too far away to render any assistance. Among the killed were six N.C.O.s and men of the 80th, who formed part of the 1st Squadron Mounted Infantry, others who were serving from the 80th in the Imperial Mounted Infantry, included Private W. Wassall, the first man of the Regiment to gain the coveted decoration of the Victoria Cross. When the camp was attacked and taken by the enemy, Private Wassall and others retreated towards the Buffalo River, and seeing a comrade (Private Westwood) struggling in the river, apparently drowning, Wassall rode down the bank, dismounted, leaving his horse on the Zulu side of the river, rescued his man from the water, remounted, and dragging Pte. Westwood with him across the river under a heavy shower of bullets, succeeded in escaping with his rescued comrade.

The First Victoria Cross, 1879.

On the 5th February Major Tucker left Lyndenberg for Derby, to take command of the Regiment with the "Transvaal Column." Lieut.-Colonel C. F. Amiel being too ill for duty, Bt.-Major Creagh was left at Pretoria to take command of the troops in the Lyndenberg district.

Major Tucker's Force consisted of about 430 all ranks, with two 6 pr. Armstrong guns. The other Officers serving with

Digitized by Google

him in the 80th were Bt.-Major C. A. F. Creagh, Captains D. B. Moriarty and W. T. Anderson, Lieuts. H. J. Johnson, J. O. Sherrard, C. L. Potts, T. J. Chamberlain, A. W. Hast and H. H. Hayward, 2nd-Lieuts. A. H. Lindop, E. K. Daubeny and B. W. Ussher.

Their operations were in the Pongolo District, immediately on the border of Zululand, and while on duty there the Regiment suffered a serious calamity.

An escort, commanded by Captain D. B. Moriarty and Lieut. Hayward, left Luneberg on the 7th March to meet a convoy of waggons coming from Derby, and on reaching the "drift" on the Intombi River, found it impossible for the convoy to cross, owing to the heavy rains swelling the river. Part of the escort, consisting of Lieut. Hayward, one sergeant and 33 rank and file were encamped on the Luneberg side, while the remainder, Captain Moriarty, Civil Surgeon Cobbin and 69 N.C.O.s and men were in a laager constructed of waggons on the Northern side of the river.

About 4.40 a.m. on the morning of the 12th March an Impi of Zulus, estimated at over 5,000 strong, attacked the Camp. It had been raining heavily all night, and when the rain ceased shortly before daylight a fog settled down.

The attack was made from the North side, and owing to the nature of the ground near the river, the approach of the enemy was not observed by the sentries until they were on them. Resistance on that side was hopeless, and Captain Moriarty, Dr. Cobbin, and a great number of the men were killed on the spot. Some swam across the river, and were covered by the party under Lieut. Hayward, who kept up a heavy fire until the enemy were climbing up the bank close to them.

Lieut. Hayward then retired towards Luneberg, pressed by the Zulus for nearly three miles. Forty-four only of the party, under Col.-Sergt. A. Booth, succeeded in reaching Luneberg, and but for the well sustained fire of this remnant none of the escort would have escaped.

All the cattle belonging to the waggons were taken by the Zulus, and the stores either looted or destroyed.

Second Victoria Cross Won at Intombi River.

The bodies of Captain Moriarty and Dr. Cobbin were recovered and brought to Luneberg for interment, and 39 other ranks found dead were brought in and buried. The total casualty list being 1 officer killed, 39 rank and file killed, and 21 rank and file missing. The largest number killed being men of "A" Company.

Colour-Sergt. A. Booth, who took charge after Lieut. Hayward had left, and by his excellent leading brought the few

Digitized by Google

survivors back to Luneberg, for his gallant conduct in this action was awarded the V.C.—the second won by the 80th (South Staffords) in the Zulu War.

While at Luneberg parties of the Regiment were engaged in patrolling the district and intercepting stray bands of Zulus raiding cattle from the Pongolo Valley. On the 5th April, 1879, a party of mounted men of the 80th, under Captain Prior and Second-Lieut. Ussher, intercepted a party of Zulus, among whom was Sirayo's son, who was killed, another being the celebrated chief, Umbelini, who was one of the party, and was shot by Captain Prior, and mortally wounded, but he managed to escape, dying on the way to his cave in the Hlobane Mountain, but the news of his death was not confirmed until the 23rd, by the General commanding the 4th Column. It was the Chief Umbelini who led the Impi which cut up the Company of the 80th at the Intombi Drift, and it was an act of retributive justice that an Officer of the 80th Regiment should have killed him.

Captain Prior Kills Zulu Chief.

In May, 1879, Colonel Rowlands, V.C., C.B., vacated the Transvaal Command, to take over a command with the Army in Zululand; in his farewell Order he specially mentioned "Major Tyler, Bt.-Major Creagh and Captain Howard of the 80th Regiment for the zeal and judgment with which they carried out their duties during the continued disturbance on the Northern Frontier of the Transvaal."

After the disaster at Isandhlwana fresh reinforcements were hurried out to the Cape, and the command of the Forces employed was given to Sir Garnet Wolseley. On his arrival in Natal he reorganised his Army into two Divisions. The 80th then became part of the Flying Column, commanded by Colonel Evelyn Wood, V.C., C.B., in the 2nd Division, but before Sir Garnet Wolseley could arrive at Headquarters Lord Chelmsford had moved up from Ginghilovo towards Ulundi. Here Cetewayo made his last stand, and on the 4th July, 1879, the British advanced to the attack, but having learned wisdom from their reverses, the attack was made in square formation. The 80th had the post of honour and formed the front face of the square.

80th in the Attack on Ulundi.

The troops fought in an immense square with the Cavalry in the centre, the only safeguard against the enveloping tactics of the Zulus, who usually attacked in crescent formation, the two horns of the crescent being wide flung to envelop and outflank any line formation. The 80th were the first Regiment across the River Umvolosi, which they crossed at 6 a.m. No sooner was the square formed opposite the military Kraal of Nodwengu than the Zulus appeared in great numbers, com-

Digitized by Google

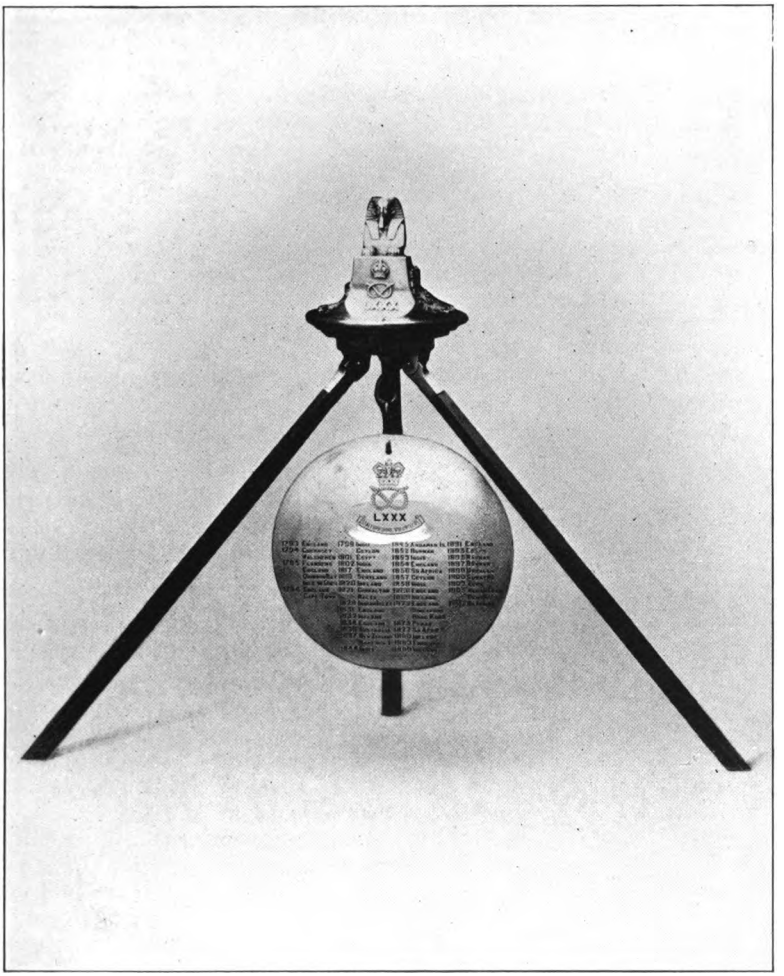


Photo. *J. P Jones.*

80TH REGIMENTAL GONG.
Showing Stations.

PLATE 8. *To face p. 106.*

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

pletely surrounding the square. Our Artillery opened fire at 8.40 a.m., and did great havoc among the enemy.

In front of the 80th appeared Cetewayo's own Regiment from the King's Kraal, which was about two miles away. After about three-quarters of an hour of heavy fighting the Zulus became demoralised, and then came the chance of the Cavalry. Leaving the square they quickly pursued the fugitive Zulus, completing the rout, so that by 9.25 a.m. the whole of the troops ceased firing.

After a short rest the troops moved forward to the King's Kraal, which was burnt, along with 7 other large military Kraals. The 80th, in spite of their prominent position in the battle, had few casualties—1 sergeant and 1 private killed, 5 others wounded.

In the attack on Ulundi Lord Chelmsford commanded in person, and was personally congratulated by Sir Garnet Wolseley on his brilliant success, who spoke in terms of praise of the admirable behaviour of all the troops serving under him.

The defeat of the Zulus at Ulundi practically ended the Campaign, for Cetewayo was captured shortly afterwards and the Zulus, now broken up into parties, were easily dealt with by the Flying Columns which swept the country.

Brig.-General Evelyn Wood's Column was finally broken up on the 31st July, 1879, and Major C. Tucker succeeded to the command of the 80th on 9th July, 1879, vice Lieut.-Colonel C. F. Amiel, retired. The Regiment was then engaged upon patrol work and scouring the country, crushing any revival of force amongst the enemy. On the 20th August, 1879, Lieut.-Colonel C. Tucker was placed in command of the Headquarters personal escort of General Sir Garnet Wolseley, K.C.M.G., K.C.B., at Ulundi. This escort consisted of five Companies of the 80th, two Companies 2/24th, three Troops King's Dragoon Guards, two 9 pdr. guns, Royal Artillery, etc. They remained on this duty until October 6th, when Lieut.-Colonel C. Tucker left for Pretoria, and the five Companies of the 80th became a detachment. While at Pretoria Colonel Tucker received a letter from Major W. W. D. Elliot, commanding 2nd Battalion King's Own Regiment, telling him that the King's Own had erected a monument at the Intombi River Drift in memory of the 80th who had fallen there.(1)

(1) When the 2nd South Staffs. Regiment was stationed in Pretoria in 1911, they erected a fine Stone at Intombi Drift to mark the place where their comrades were killed in 1879. This was erected at a spot selected by Captain and Qr.-Mr. E. T. Hynes and Captain M. B. Savage, who made a special visit to Intombi Drift for the purpose.

Digitized by Google

80th at "The Fighting Koppee."

While various detachments of the 80th were doing duty in Zululand and the Transvaal, on November 20th, 1879, Major Creagh took charge of a Column operating against the rebel Chief Sekukuni, whose stronghold was called the "Fighting Koppee." This detachment of the 80th included Captains Howard and Rowarth, Lieuts. Horsbrugh, Lyons and Raitt, with "F" and "G" Companies. Marching from Luneberg they joined the Column under Sir Garnet Wolseley, and took part in the attack on Sekukuni's stronghold. The 80th were the first British troops that reached the summit of the Fighting Koppee, gallantly taking it at the point of the bayonet. They had one man wounded. In a letter received by Colonel Tucker on December 9th, 1879, from the Chief of Staff:—

"Army Headquarters,
Pretoria, 9th Dec., 1879.

"To Lieut.-Colonel Tucker,
Commanding H.M.'s 80th Regiment.

"Sir,

"I am directed by General Sir Garnet Wolseley to bring to your especial notice the very admirable conduct of Sergeant Horton and the detachment of the Regiment who formed the escort of the General Commanding during the recent operations against the Chief Sekukuni.

"From the day when the General left Pretoria on the 18th October last, until his return to-day, the behaviour of the escort has been all that could possibly be desired. It is not only that they never gave any trouble or cause for reproof, but they showed a cheerfulness and willingness in the performance of their duties that was beyond praise. No soldiers could have done better.

"Sergt. Horton and the whole of the detachment joined in the storming of the Fighting Koppee at Sekukuni's town on the morning of the 28th November.

I have, etc., etc.,

(Signed) HENRY BRACKENBURY, Lieut.-Colonel,
Military Secretary and Acting Chief of Staff."

After the defeat of Sekukuni the detachment marched back to Pretoria, reaching there on the 14th December, when for the first time, after taking part in four campaigns, the Regiment was concentrated again. Many hardships and heavy marches had been endured during this period, but there was no rest for the 80th, for on Christmas Eve, 1879, they received orders to proceed to England—never was news more welcome. On this date the Regiment was drawn up in close Column, at 11 a.m., with Officers and Colours to the front, and received the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Garnet Wolseley, with a General

Digitized by Google

Salute. Afterwards the following General Order was read to the Regiment by the Chief of the Staff:—

"General Order by his Excellency, General Sir Garnet J. Wolseley, G.C.M.G., K.C.B., Commanding the Forces in South Africa.

"The 80th Regiment will march to-day from Pretoria, by way of Potchesftroom and Kimberley to Beaufort West, in the Cape Colony, and will thence proceed by rail to Capetown, there to embark for England.

"The General Commanding cannot allow this Regiment to enter upon its homeward march without expressing his high sense of its soldier-like bearing and conduct.

"The 80th Regiment has served three years in South Africa, during which time it has taken part in the Zulu War, and in two Expeditions against Sekukuni, and has borne the fatigue of long marches over a great extent of country, yet after this varied and trying service its appearance and discipline would do credit to any Regiment in Her Majesty's Service.

"The General Commanding is well assured that, in the march now before it, the 80th Regiment, under command of Lieut.-Colonel Tucker, will show to the inhabitants of the Transvaal, Griqualand West, and the Cape Colony, an example of what a British Regiment should be, not only in marching power, but in loyalty, discipline and orderly conduct. By Order.

(Signed) HENRY BRACKENBURY, Lieut.-Colonel,
Acting Chief of the Staff.

Army Headquarters,
Pretoria, 26th December, 1879."

The reading of the Order concluded, Sir Garnet Wolseley addressed the Regiment as follows:—"Throughout the Sekukuni Campaign I had a small detachment of the Regiment, under command of Sergt. Horton, as my personal escort. They took part in the storming of Sekukuni's stronghold, and their conduct, during the period of their absence from Headquarters, was an example of what a soldier's conduct should be. In all my service, and I have been a considerable time a soldier, a finer and a better disciplined body of men I have never met, and I compliment you, Colonel Tucker, and the Officers of the Regiment, upon having such a body of men belonging to your Corps. In the early days of my connection with the Army, I had the honour of wearing the uniform of the 80th, and I look back to those days with great pleasure and great pride. The men I now see before me are fitting successors to those with whom I was first associated on active service. If I were asked to give a convincing proof, that, in

Digitized by Google

"my opinion the War in South Africa was at an end, I should point to the fact that I am dispensing with the services of such a Regiment. If any danger were apprehended, the 80th would be the first Corps whose services I should retain. I part from the Regiment with great regret, and, in saying good-bye, I wish you a prosperous voyage, and a safe arrival among your friends in England."(1)

Disturbance at Potchefstroom.

From Pretoria, on December 26th, 1879, the Regiment began their memorable march to the Coast, averaging over 20 miles a day. By the 4th January, 1880, they had reached Klerksdorp. Here, owing to the disturbed state of the Transvaal, and hearing that the Boers had formed a laager at Potchefstroom, Colonel Tucker, with Captains Howard and Potts, and 57 N.C.O.s and men, returned to Potchefstroom on mule waggons, arriving early on the morning of the 5th. He arrested Mr. Pretorius, the Dutch President of the "People's Committee," and recalled the Regiment to Potchefstroom, leaving the heavy baggage at Klerksdorp under a guard of 10 men from each Company. The Regiment marched the 33 miles in 13 hours 40 minutes. The Regiment encamped outside the town as the Boers had broken up their encampment on the arrival of the troops, and Mr. Pretorius was admitted to bail. They remained here until 14th January, when orders were received from General Wolseley changing their route from by way of Kimberley and Beaufort to by way of Heidelberg and Pietermaritzberg to Durban for embarkation.

The discipline which has always been such a marked characteristic of the 2nd South Staffords received its due meed of praise from the Landrost of Potchefstroom, who wrote to Colonel Tucker congratulating him on the fact that not a single complaint of misconduct, or one case of drunkenness against any of the 80th Regiment had been brought before him. Similar testimony was received from the Landrosts of Utrecht and Newcastle.

For his services in this campaign Colonel C. Tucker received the C.B., and Captain J. E. H. Prior received a Brev. Major; while Brev. Major J. L. Bradshaw was promoted Major. Major Creagh was appointed Special Commissioner in the Lyndensberg district of the Transvaal.

The Regiment embarked at Durban on board the "Orontes" on the 3rd April, 1880, and called at Table Bay on the 10th to take on board a detachment under command of Captain and Brev. Major J. H. Prior, and the women and children of the Regiment. The voyage was uneventful, but three men of the Regiment died on board. The strength of the Regiment on

(1) *Ex.* inform. General E. K. Daubeney, C.B.E., D.S.O.

Digitized by Google

arriving at Kingstown Harbour, Ireland, on 11th May, was 803.

The condition of the Regiment was deplorable. The men had nothing beyond their field service kit, completely worn out. In fact, they were in rags, nothing serviceable about them beyond their arms and accoutrements, and these were pretty well used up after three years' campaigning.

The men had not been shaved for years, and each one wore a beard, strips of worn-out shirts did duty as socks, while their almost soleless boots were held together with bits of string. The Staff Officer who went on board to receive them had the shock of his life, and implored Colonel Tucker not to disembark them until they were made more presentable, but the Colonel said: "No, my men have not had a roof over their heads for upwards of three years, and I am bound to be in Richmond Barracks before sunset." And he was!

80th on Home Service.

"The march up Constitution Hill, past the Castle, was a sight that will never be forgotten. The whole of Dublin turned out, including the Lord-Lieutenant and Commander-in-Chief in Ireland, who stood at the Castle gate and joined in the cheering as the magnificent body of men swept by. Tucker said he thought it would do the people good to see exactly what men looked like on Service."

A few days in barracks cleaning up and refitting, and the old 80th turned out the smartest looking Regiment in the Garrison.

A writer at the time described the personality of Colonel Tucker:— "He is a born soldier, tall, handsome, and of splendid physique, a man of rare ability and of extraordinarily quick perception. Nothing escapes his notice, his mind is made up in an instant; he decides at once, and his decision is invariably correct. No one is a greater master of detail, and few are blessed with his powerful and retentive memory. Although to strangers he gives the impression of being a harsh, austere, unbending man, yet he has a kind heart and a most generous disposition."

Colonel Tucker's forceful personality occasionally expressed itself in somewhat forcible language, but as his men used to say: "Lor! it only woke us up a bit, and always went 'ome!" A good story is told of him during his term of command of the troops in Natal. During his tenure of office a new Garrison Adjutant, a meek and conscientious youth was appointed. General Tucker, as he was then, told the youth to provide himself with a note book for jotting down various memoranda, and more particularly to note the General's criticism on the conduct of field days. Shortly afterwards a

Digitized by Google

field day was held, followed by the customary "pow-wow," and next day Tucker called the Garrison Adjutant in and said, "Now Mr. ———, did you take down the remarks I made at the conclusion of yesterday's operations?"

"Yes, Sir; yes, Sir," replied B——. "Ah, now what was the first remark I made, Mr. B——?" B—— produced his note book, found the page, and replied: "Your first remark, Sir, was, 'As usual! Six ——— umpires and no ——— use!' "

For their work in this Campaign the 80th (South Staffords) on the 1st June, 1881, were granted permission to inscribe the word

SOUTH AFRICA, 1878-9

on their Roll of Battle Honours.

During their period of Home service in Ireland the 80th were frequently called out to assist the Civil Powers, and during the agitation caused by the activities of the "Land League" in Ireland, detachments of the Regiment were sent to various disturbed districts. Needless to say, that while this kind of "police duty" is most distasteful to a soldier, the South Staffords had "no complaints" from the natives of the districts they patrolled; a fine tribute to the behaviour of the Regiment often in difficult circumstances.

Change of Title, 1881.

While in Ireland, on 11th April, 1881, the new Army organisation dispensed with the old numbers of Regiments, and gave them a "Territorial Title." Thus by the new system, all the single Battalions, with one exception, became "linked Battalions," and formed "Brigade sub-districts," and under this "Order" the "linked Battalions" and the Militia were combined into a Regiment.

Thus the 38th (1st Staffordshire Regiment) and the 80th (Staffordshire Volunteers) became respectively the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the South Staffordshire Regiment, while the two Militia Battalions (1st and 2nd King's Own Staffordshire Militia) became the 3rd and 4th (Militia) Battalions of the Regiment. At the same time the yellow facings of the uniforms were changed to the universal white pattern. The Officers ceased to wear the silver lace which had been worn since about 1820, and in place of it, wore the universal gold lace pattern.

The badges of the Regiment were also altered, instead of the numbers 38th and 80th the Regiment retained the "Staffordshire Knot and Crown."

During their service in Ireland, in September, 1882, a detachment of the 2nd Battalion was under orders to proceed

Digitized by Google

to Egypt to join the 1st Battalion, who were serving under Lord Wolseley against Arabi Pasha and the Egyptian rebels, but this little war ending quickly, their services were not required, and as stated elsewhere, the 1st Battalion only were engaged in this Campaign.

While in Ireland the 2nd Battalion found detachments for five different places, viz., Millstreet, Killarney, Castleisland, Listown and Rath-keale, performing extremely hard duties in connection with the Land League agitation, which was in full swing during the years they were there. Kerry was one of the most disturbed counties in Ireland. **Land League Agitation.**

In October, 1883, the 2nd Battalion was transferred to the Depôt at Lichfield, from whence drafts were continually being despatched to reinforce the 1st Battalion serving in Egypt. On March 10th, 1885, Lieut.-Colonel Sir V. Pringle, Bart., was appointed to the Command of the 1st Battalion in place of Lieut.-Colonel P. H. Eyre, who was killed at the Battle of Kirbekan, Lieut.-Colonel J. Webber Smith being posted to the 2nd Battalion. In January, 1886, two Companies, "C" and "E," under Major Hast and Lieuts. Brooksband and Greenfield were sent to Llanberis, in North Wales, to assist the Civil Authorities, as the district was in a disturbed condition owing to a big strike of the quarrymen, and the importation of outside labour into the quarries.

The 2nd Battalion went into garrison at Plymouth in March the same year, under the command of Colonel Creagh, later moving to Devonport, where they were stationed until September, 1889, when they moved to the Curragh Camp, Ireland. On 11th February, 1891, Colonel J. Webber Smith relinquished the command of the Battalion, and was succeeded by Lieut.-Colonel J. Edward Hale Prior on 21st February the same year. Later, the 2nd Battalion moved to Aldershot on 9th December, 1891.

The following extract, from a Service paper, relates to an amusing incident during the stay of the 80th at Aldershot:—

"A very smart regiment, just gone to the soldiering centre of England, has the best mess in H.M. Service, and also one of the good old sort of mess waiters, so rare a find in the present day. One of those who sit up with the late birds till all hours in the morning, getting drinks, &c., but who is up again as fresh as a lark to give the subaltern of the day his breakfast, and always with a jolly smile on his face. He has, however, born from long service, a profound contempt for the second-lieutenant.

"The other day a big dinner was on, and no doubt the resources of the linen cupboard were very highly tried.

Digitized by Google

"A captain, on taking his seat and unfolding his napkin, found it in one mass of holes. He turned round to John, the waiter, and said, showing the napkin: 'This is too bad, John!'

"John (in a great hurry): 'Well it ain't my fault, sir, if you will sit in a seat I had laid for a second lieutenant!' "

During the great colliers strike of August and September, 1893, the Battalion was employed assisting the Civil Authorities in Yorkshire. The Regiment was split up in detachments, one of these, posted at Acton Hall Colliery, Featherstone, on 7th September, 1893, comprising Sergt. Barwell, Col.-Sergt. Hughes and 26 other ranks, under the command of Captain D. H. Barker, unfortunately came in conflict with the rioters, in which two colliers were killed.

Featherstone Riots, Yorkshire, 1893.

An enquiry was held, presided over by Lord Justice Bowen, which, after a thorough investigation of all the evidence, completely exonerated the troops from blame. Their Report says:—"Assaulted by missiles on all sides, we think that in the events which have happened, Captain Barker and his troops had no alternative but to fire, and it seems to us that Mr. Hartley was bound to require them to do so. . . . . .

"We feel it right to express our sense of the steadiness and discipline of the soldiers in the circumstances."(1)

The rioters had set on fire the colliery buildings and were stoning the soldiers and the Fire Brigade when it arrived, preventing the firemen from extinguishing the fire. Mr. Hartley, the magistrate present, appealed in vain to the mob, but in the darkness of the night the crowds became more menacing. Finally, when all appeals and efforts to cope with the disorder had failed Mr. Hartley read the Riot Act, and the troops charged to clear a way to the entrance to the colliery, and very reluctantly the order was given to fire on the hostile mob.

After the settlement of the strike the various detachments of the 2nd Battalion were collected and rejoined the Regiment, which was now serving at Alexandria, Egypt.

80th in Egypt.

They remained in Egypt until 11th October, 1895, when the Battalion embarked at Suez on H.M.S. "Malabar" for India. For the next two years the Battalion was stationed at Wellington, and on the 18th October, 1897, they embarked at Calicut in H.M.S. "Clive" for Rangoon, arriving there on October 26th. After two years' service in Burmah the Regiment returned to Calcutta on December 2nd, 1899, and served

(1) *Vide* Official Report.

Digitized by Google

at various stations in India until November 12th, 1907, when they embarked on the H.M.T. "Soudan" for South Africa.

While serving in India a detachment of the 80th served in the operations on the Punjab Frontier, and at Tirah, in 1897-98; and the following Officer and N.C.O.s received the "India Medal," with Clasps, "Punjab Frontier, 1897-1898," and "Tirah, 1897-1898":—

Captain W. F. Corbett, Sergts. G. T. Butler and C. F. Woodbridge, Lc.-Sergt. A. Share and Corporals T. Parkes and H. Scott.

This detachment was employed under the Commissariat Transport Department.

During their period of service in Southern India (H.Q., Wellington, detachments at Malapuram, Calicut and Canamore) the Malapuram detachment ("H" Company, under Captain H. C. Chads and Lieut. Watson, and the Calicut detachment under Captain E. Layton and 2nd Lieut. Corbett) were employed in the suppression of a fanatical outbreak amongst a Mahommedan sect called Moplahs. In the suppression of the first outbreak, in 1896, 92 Moplahs were either killed or wounded, there were no casualties on the British side. In the outbreak in 1897 only the Calicut detachment ("F" Company, under Captain Layton), was employed. An interesting incident in connection with these outbreaks was that Captain Layton discovered, by reference to some old books found at a small village named Manjeri, that H.M.'s 80th Regiment had marched on the same road exactly 100 years earlier to the day, when fighting in the wars against Tippo Sahib.

Moplah Campaign, 1897.

While serving in India the 2nd South Staffords on 21st February, 1906, received new Colours from H.R.H. the Prince of Wales. The Battalion, under command of Lieut.-Colonel E. K. Daubeney, D.S.O., proceeded by rail to Benares, and was formed up in hollow square in the grounds of Nandesar House at 9 a.m. on the 21st.

Their Royal Highnesses (the Prince and Princess of Wales) were received with a Royal Salute, and the ceremony of consecrating the new Colours was performed by the Rev. C. A. Mason, Chaplain of Benares, assisted by the Revs. Clark and Bennerly. It was intended for the ceremony to be performed by the Bishop of Lucknow, but owing to its having been postponed to this date he was unable to be present.

At the conclusion of the consecration service, the King's Colour was handed to H.R.H. by Major I. Kirkpatrick, and received by Lieut. Morrison. Major Tottenham and 2nd

Digitized by Google

Lieut. Gannon respectively presenting and receiving the Regimental Colour.

H.R.H. the Prince of Wales then addressed the Battalion as follows:—

Presentation of New Colours by H.R.H. Prince of Wales at Benares, 1906.

"Colonel Daubeney, Officers, N.C.O.s and men of the South Staffordshire Regiment. Meeting here to perform this ceremony on Indian soil, we are reminded that during the 112 years that have elapsed since your Battalion was raised, some of its most brilliant services have been achieved in this portion of the British Empire.

"With regard to its gallant conduct at Ferozeshah in 1845, Lord Hardinge, the then Governor-General of India, described it as 'that Regiment which has earned immortal fame in the annals of the British Army,' and not only on the field of battle has your Regiment gained renown, for no less than three times did it suffer shipwreck in Eastern waters.

"We know there is no greater test of the discipline of a Regiment than under such terrible experiences, and the conduct of the 80th Regiment in the last disaster of this nature in 1844, was brought to the notice of Queen Victoria, and commended in a General Order by the Governor-General of India.

"It is indeed a grand tradition which surrounds the Colours of your Regiment, a tradition created by those who, in days gone by, fought and fell in their defence.

"I feel sure that they will ever inspire the same spirit of loyalty to your King, your Country and your Regiment, and that, if needs be, you will, like your predecessors, do and die in the defence of these sentiments. With such convictions I have great pleasure in entrusting to your keeping these consecrated Colours."

Lieut.-Colonel E. K. Daubeney, D.S.O., then replied as follows:—

"Your Royal Highness, on behalf of all ranks of the 2nd Battalion South Staffs. Regiment, I beg to offer our heartfelt thanks for the great honour conferred upon the Battalion. We are deeply gratified by your Royal Highness's references to the past services of the 80th Regiment, and we know that this feeling will be shared by the people of Staffordshire, with which County, this Battalion has been closely connected throughout its history. To-day's ceremony will never be forgotten in the Battalion, and I feel assured that all who in future serve with these Colours will do their utmost to show themselves worthy of the confidence reposed in them by your Royal Highness."

Digitized by Google

The new Colours having been given a General Salute, and marched into their place, a Royal Salute was given, and H.R.H. the Prince of Wales graciously accepted a silver-framed silk embroidered copy of the new Colours, presented by Lieut.-Colonel Daubeney on behalf of the Battalion. This concluded the proceedings, and the Battalion returned by rail to Allahabad. The old Colour poles, which had been in the Armoury at Malta were now restored to the Battalion. The Colours originally fixed on these poles (a remnant still remains on each) were presented to the Battalion in 1814, and were placed in the Malta Armoury in 1829.

The War Office refused to allow the new Colours to be attached to these poles, which were surmounted by heavy cast brass finials of a Sphinx, but the Battalion was allowed to retain them, and they are now one of their treasured possessions. The old Colours were afterwards deposited in Lichfield Cathedral, on the Battalion's return to England.

80th in South Africa.

In November, 1907, the 2nd South Staffords moved from India to South Africa, and were quartered at Pretoria.

On November 9th, 1908, the Battalion trooped the King's Colour in the Church Square, Pretoria, the occasion being the birthday of H.M. King Edward VII. They were specially complimented by Lord Methuen, Commander-in-Chief, South Africa, for their good work on this occasion.

On the 5th April, 1910, the Battalion formed a Guard of Honour on the occasion of the opening of the New Boer Parliament at Pretoria, by Lord Selborne, and on May 9th, attended the Proclamation of H.M. King George V. in Church Square, Pretoria.

On leaving Pretoria on 18th January, 1911, the following letter was received from the Commandant, Transvaal Police, Pretoria:—

> "I cannot allow your Regiment to leave Pretoria without expressing to you my appreciation officially of the way in which your men have behaved during the stay of the Regiment in Pretoria. From a Police point of view their conduct in town could not have been better.
>
> "They leave with the good wishes of the whole of the population of Pretoria. On behalf of the Officers, N.C.O.s and men of the Transvaal Police stationed at Pretoria I wish to thank you and your Officers for the kindness and courtesy always extended by them towards members of the force, and to wish you all, on their behalf, a safe and pleasant voyage.
>
> (Signed) H. F. TREW, Dist. Comdt. Transvaal Police."

Digitized by Google

For the last year of their stay in Pretoria the 2nd Battalion Football Team had a splendid record for the season. They won the Pretoria Senior League, Wednesday League, Reserve Division League, Wednesday Challenge Cup, and the Dewar Shield, and lost Army Cup (in third round), Transvaal Cup (in final) and Pretoria Challenge Cup (in final). The net result of their matches for the season being: Played 57, won 39, drawn 14, lost 4. Goals for 129, against 38. "Truly a remarkable performance."

The Battalion also did remarkably well in the boxing arena and in the running and rifle competitions, winning the Gold Jewel for South Africa, N.C.O.s Rifle Competition and the Young Soldiers' Competition in the Army Rifle Meeting held at Bloemfontein.

The Regiment returned to England in 1911, on board H.M.T. "Soudan," the same troopship that had brought them from India to South Africa. Before landing at Southampton the Officers of the Battalion presented the Captain with a silver cigarette box to commemorate the voyage, and as a small token of the pleasant relations which existed between him and the Officers.

They landed at Southampton in February, 1911, after eighteen years' service abroad, and went to Whittington Barracks, Lichfield, where they received an enthusiastic reception.

Home Again, 1911.

After their arrival at Lichfield, on February 15th, 1911, and while at Whittington Barracks, the 2nd Battalion, on the 20th April of that year, paraded "as strong as possible," and attended a Homecoming Service in Lichfield Cathedral, when the old Colours presented to the 80th Regiment, at Quilon, Southern India, in 1814 (and borne by the Regiment until 1829, when they were deposited in the Armoury at Malta, from whence they were restored to the 2nd Battalion through the intervention of Lieut.-Colonel E. K. Daubeney, D.S.O., on the 22nd February, 1906), and the Colours presented to the 80th in 1872 and borne by them during the Sekukuni and Zulu Campaigns of 1878-1879, were taken to the Cathedral by a Guard under the command of Captain P. C. L. Routledge, with Lieut. S. G. Johnson, two Sergeants, two Corporals, and 50 men (the oldest soldiers) as escort to the Colours. These old Colours were received by the Dean and Chapter, and deposited in the Cathedral, near the Sikh Memorial in the South Transept.

On the 22nd April, the same year, the Battalion was inspected on the Parade Square at Whittington, by the Earl of Dartmouth, Lord Lieutenant of the County, who offered

Digitized by Google

them an Official welcome home, and spoke of the affection Staffordshire people had for the Regiment, which, perhaps, more than any other County Regiment, was mainly recruited from the County with which it is identified.

In 1911 the Battalion was employed on strike duty in Manchester, and in the summer of that year the Regiment, with other Battalions of the Brigade, went to Rhayader, in Wales, for a Brigade Camp of exercise. While there the Railway Strike broke out, and the Battalion was employed on strike duty in Liverpool. When the strike terminated they returned to Rhayader and completed their camp of exercise.

Guard at Windsor Castle.

On the 24th August, 1912, the 2nd Battalion relieved the 2nd Grenadier Guards, at Windsor, remaining there until September 20th, and during this period furnished a daily guard for Windsor Castle.

During the summer of 1913 the 2nd Battalion took part in the manœuvres both in Ireland and England. On the conclusion of these the 2nd Battalion left Rugby on September 28th, 1913, for Aldershot, where they formed part of the 6th Infantry Brigade, in the 2nd Division. They were still at Aldershot on the outbreak of the Great War on August 4th, 1914, and were one of the first Regiments to proceed to France.

The "Old Comrades' Association."

On April 8th, 1911, an "Old Comrades' Association" was started by the Regiment, and the first Annual Dinner was held at the Stork Hotel, Walsall, May 24th, Lieut.-Colonel I. Kirkpatrick in the chair. Major Layton, D.S.O. (Hon. Sec.) read the accounts, which showed that the Association was established on a firm footing. These gatherings were continued until the outbreak of the Great War in 1914, when they were abandoned until 1920, when these annual Meetings and Dinners were revived by a Dinner in the Town Hall, Walsall, on 17th April, 1920. The Association is doing excellent work in relieving necessitous ex-soldiers and soldiers' widows, and has a substantial sum invested in Government Funds, but as the calls since the Great War show an excess of grants in aid over previous years, the Committee desire, and hope for, an increase in the number of subscribers. Captain S. Bradbury, M.C., is the present Hon. Sec. of the Association (1922).

Digitized by Google

BATTLE HONOURS.

(Old 38th Foot and 80th Foot.)

THE SPHINX, superscribed "EGYPT."(2)
GUADALOUPE, 1759.(1)
MARTINIQUE, 1762.(1)
MONTE VIDEO, 1807.(1)
ROLEIA, 1808.(1)
VIMIERA, 1808.(1)
CORUNNA, 1809.(1)
BUSACO, 1810.(1)
BADAJOZ, 1812.(1)
SALAMANCA, 1812.(1)
VITTORIA, 1813.(1)
ST. SEBASTIAN, 1813.(1)
NIVE, 1814.(1)
PENINSULA, 1808-14.(1)
AVA, 1824.(1)
MOODKEE, 1845.(2)
FEROZESHAH, 1845.(2)
SOBRAON, 1846.(2)
PEGU, 1852.(2)
ALMA, 1854.(1)
INKERMAN, 1854.(1)
SEVASTOPOL, 1855.(1)
LUCKNOW, 1858.(1)
CENTRAL INDIA, 1858.(2)
SOUTH AFRICA, 1878-79.(2)
EGYPT, 1882.(1)
NILE, 1884-85.(1)
KIRBEKAN, 1885.(1)
SOUTH AFRICA, 1900-02.(1)

---

(1) Honours gained by 1st Battalion.
(2) Honours gained by 2nd Battalion.

Digitized by Google

THE GREAT WAR, 1914—1918.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE GREAT WAR, 1914-1918.

INTRODUCTORY.

THE tragedy at Sarajevo on the 28th of June, 1914, was the first intimation of the possibility of a European War, then came Austria's impossible ultimatum to Serbia, with its drastic conditions; one thing it made plain, if Serbia refused to accept such humiliating conditions war became inevitable, and that meant war not only between Austria and Serbia, but the other great European nations as well, for Russia was bound to protect Serbia against Austrian aggression.

Great Britain interested herself as mediator, and Sir Edward Grey, the British Foreign Minister, in his desire to avert war, spared no effort during those anxious days to preserve peace.

Pacific intervention by the Great Powers, Britain and France, acting together, did not avail, Germany who was ready for war, and determined on war, refused all offers of mediation, and taking the side of Austria, ruthlessly invaded Belgium; tearing up the "Scrap of Paper," as her Chancellor cynically called the solemn Treaty she had signed with the other Great Powers, to preserve the neutrality of Belgium.

This violation of Belgium brought Great Britain into the war. An ultimatum was sent to Germany protesting against the invasion of the peaceful State of Belgium, and a time limit was given to Germany to reply. But Germany, in her reckless arrogance and contempt of other nations, had already committed the crime she was solemnly warned against. Nothing then remained but for Britain to fulfil her obligation to both Belgium and France, the former she had pledged herself to protect, the latter, she could not stand by and allow to be crushed out of existence. The period of tension existing at the end of July, 1914, oppressed everybody, but most people hoped for a peaceful settlement of the dispute. When the dramatic climax came of Britain's Declaration of War on Germany, on that fateful day, August 4th, 1914, the people were stunned, but only those who knew of Germany's strength

War Declared, 4th August, 1914.

Digitized by Google

and colossal preparation, realised what this country, and the whole world were in for.

When war was declared, the South Staffordshire Regiment was scattered, the 1st Battalion was at Pietermaritzberg, in South Africa; the 2nd Battalion was at Aldershot; the 3rd and 4th Battalions, constituting the Special Reserve, were in training at Lichfield; while the 5th and 6th Battalions (Territorials) had left their Depôts, on the 2nd August, for their Annual Camp in North Wales, only to be brought back again next day to Walsall and Wolverhampton, when they were mobilised.

As previously stated the South Staffordshire Regiment on the outbreak of the Great War, consisted of six Battalions. Six other Service Battalions were raised during the war, and a brief record of their service will be found at the end of this history.

The Expeditionary Force to be sent to France comprised two Army Corps, under the command of Field-Marshal Sir John French,[1] and consisted of Seven Divisions, but of these, only the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 5th Divisions went out in August, the 4th Division arrived in time to help at Le Cateau, while the 7th Division did not land in Belgium until early in October.

6th Infantry Brigade.

The 1st Army Corps was commanded by General Sir Douglas Haig, and the 2nd South Staffs. Regiment formed part of the 6th Infantry Brigade of the 2nd Division. The 2nd Division was commanded by General Munro, and the 6th Infantry Brigade by General Davies. This Brigade was composed of the following Regiments:—

1st King's Liverpool Regiment,
2nd South Staffordshire Regiment,
1st Royal Berkshire Regiment,
1st King's Royal Rifles.

The embarkation of the troops began on the night of the 7th August, 1914, and the Aldershot Division was the first to go, the 2nd South Staffs. Regiment landing in France on August 13th; ten days afterwards the whole of the British Expeditionary Force, with the exception of the 7th Division, had landed in France. The whole operations had been conducted with such secrecy that the British Army was in France before the people at home realised or knew that it had left England. Marvellous indeed was the work accomplished by the railways, trains from all parts of the country arrived at the port of embarkation, running to their scheduled times, and on

(1) Afterwards Viscount French of Ypres.

Digitized by Google

Monday, August 17th, it was officially announced that the Expeditionary Force was safely landed in France. In the words of Sir John French's Despatch :—"The transport of the troops from England, both by sea and by rail, was effected in the best order and without a check. Each unit arrived at its destination in this country well within the scheduled time. The concentration was practically complete on the evening of Friday, the 21st ultimo, and I was able to make dispositions to move the Force during Saturday, the 22nd."

The chief object of the British Army was to prolong the French line of resistance in a north-westerly direction, the intention being to delay the German advance while the French were getting into position, and further to endeavour to outflank the Germans in the north-west. The line for which the British Army was originally destined was the high road which runs from Charleroi through Binche to Mons, in Belgium, but when the British reached this line, it was found impracticable to hold it, for the Germans were already in possession of Charleroi, and the French on our right had fallen back beyond the prolongation of this line, thus leaving the British right in the air.

Had the intended original line been held it would have meant that the British Forces would have been cut off and isolated. In these circumstances there was no alternative but to range the 1st Army Corps along the Mons-Beaumont road, in rear of the position first contemplated. While the 2nd Army Corps lined the canal between Mons and Conde. Such then was the position of the British Forces on August 22nd, 1914. The 6th Infantry Brigade of the 2nd Division, of which the 2nd Battalion South Staffords formed a part, were on the right of the 1st King's Liverpool Regiment, facing south-east of Mons, in the neighbourhood of Harmignies.

The town of Mons was the centre of the position, it is linked to Conde by a canal which runs nearly due west to the River Scheldt, used chiefly for coal traffic from the coalfields round Mons before the days of the railways. It is almost a straight line from Conde to Mons, where it makes a sort of horse-shoe loop round the latter town, and then curves north-east to the Scheldt. **Mons, 1914.**

As soon as their positions were reached the troops began to entrench, as they toiled at this work during the long hours of Saturday, August 22nd, sounds were heard from eastward like the distant noise of a violent thunderstorm. This was thought to be the roar of the big German guns before the fortress of Namur, while some said it indicated a battle to the right of their position on the River Sambre. No definite news of what was happening appears to have reached Sir John

Digitized by Google

French, but from what was known afterwards, the French Fifth Army, who were holding the front from Charleroi to Dinant, on the right of the 1st British Corps, under Sir Douglas Haig, had been attacked by superior German Forces on the line of the River Sambre, there was fierce fighting round Charleroi, which was taken and retaken several times, but eventually the French were overpowered by superior numbers and forced to retire, this was due to a flank attack by fresh German troops released by the fall of Namur. The French retirement placed the British Forces in a perilous position, but Sir John French, under the impression that his right flank was secure, remained in position at Mons until Sunday, August 23rd, when "About 3 p.m. on this day, reports began to come in to the effect that the enemy was commencing an attack on the Mons line, apparently in some strength, but that the right of the position from Mons to Bray was being particularly threatened."(1) This seemed to indicate that the 1st Army Corps was in danger, Sir Douglas Haig, who had pushed his flank back to some high ground south of Bray, then evacuated Binche, which was immediately occupied by the enemy. The position at Mons was now dangerous, and Sir John French directed the Commander of the 2nd Army Corps, Sir H. Smith-Dorrien, "not to keep the troops in this position too long, but, if threatened seriously, to draw back the centre behind Mons." This was done after dark. Meantime, about 5 p.m., Sir John French had received a most unexpected and disquieting telegram from General Joffre, telling him that "at least three German Corps, viz., a Reserve Corps, and the 4th and 9th Corps, were moving on my position in front, and that the 2nd German Corps was engaged in a turning movement from the direction of Tournai. He also informed me that the two reserve French Divisions and the Fifth French Army on my right were retiring, the Germans having on the previous day gained possession of the passages of the Sambre between Charleroi and Namur.(2)

Retreat from Mons.

There was a certain amount of fighting along the whole line during the night, and at daybreak on the 24th, the 2nd Division, including the 2nd South Staffords, owing to the extreme pressure of the Germans, made a hasty retirement in the direction of Bavai, Captain M. B. Savage, of "A" Company narrowly escaping capture by the enemy.

The wonderful retreat from Mons continued until September 7th, when the German Cavalry were within twenty miles of Paris. This marked the limit of the German advance on Paris in 1914. During this period, from 21st August to 5th September, inclusive, the 2nd Battalion marched a distance

(1) Sir John French's Despatch.
(2) *Ibid.*

Digitized by Google

of 236 miles in 16 days, with only one day's halt during the time, and continually engaged in rearguard actions against a hotly pursuing enemy.

The tide then turned, and the Allies assumed the offensive at the battle of the Marne, where they forced the Germans to retreat past the Aisne, at which latter place the enemy rallied on strong positions already prepared. The dramatic story of the historic retreat from Mons is told in the record of the work of the 2nd Battalion.(1)

In the meantime the Germans made a new advance in Belgium, entering Antwerp on October 8th, 1914, Ostend being captured on the 16th, and three days later Ghent had fallen, they then began moving down the coast towards the Channel Ports. The remnant of the Belgian Army retiring from Antwerp, withdrew behind the River Yser. The Belgian retirement was covered by the famous 7th Division, commanded by Major-General Sir H. Rawlinson. The 1st Battalion South Staffords were in the 22nd Brigade of this Division, and helped to stem the tide of the German invasion. Although they did not land in France until October, 1914, as the senior Battalion of the Regiment I give their record first.

(1) See page 250.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



Photo. *Swaine.*

BRIG.-GENERAL R. M. OVENS, C.M.G.,
Commanding 1st Battalion, 1914-1916.

PLATE 9. *To face p. 129*

Digitized by Google

THE RECORD OF THE 1ST BATTALION.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE GREAT WAR.

THE RECORD OF THE 1ST BATTALION, 1914.

(THE OLD 38TH.)

South Africa—Voyage to England—Lyndhurst Camp—Defence of Antwerp—Ypres, First Battle—Fighting at Kruiseik—Defence of Gheluvelt—Captain J. F. Vallentin Awarded the Victoria Cross—Attack on Well Farm.

MANY Divisions of the British Army covered themselves with glory during those fateful four years and three months, and many Regiments won undying fame; but there are few indeed who can surpass the work and record of the glorious 7th Division, and the Infantry Regiments which formed its Brigades.

The 1st Battalion South Staffordshire Regiment (38th) was at Pietermaritzberg, South Africa, when war was declared, and on the 7th August, 1914, they received orders to proceed to England for Active Service. Lieut.-Colonel R. M. Ovens, Commanding Officer, called a meeting of Officers and read the message to them.

38th Leave South Africa.

The Regiment left Pietermaritzberg on the 21st August, 1914, in four trains for Capetown, Major Welchman being in charge of the first train; Captain Dunlop the second: Major Buckle the third; and Lieut.-Colonel R. M. Ovens the fourth. The journey to Capetown, via Ladysmith and Bloemfontein, was a long and tedious one, taking four days to complete. The married families left on August 23rd, in charge of Major Elsner, R.A.M.C., and Captain de Brath, A.S.C., and on arrival at Capetown embarked on H.M.T. "Guildford Castle."

The Battalion embarked on H.M.T. "Briton," and left the harbour to wait outside for the remainder of the troops, remaining there until all was ready; when the guns, horses, etc., of the other units, *i.e.* the 10th Hussars, 1st Royal Dragoons, and three Batteries of the Royal Field Artillery (22nd Brigade), under Colonel Fasson, R.F.A., were embarked.

The troops were in six hired transports, in two lines of three each, with two cruisers, H.M. Ships "Hyacinth" and "Astra," as escorts. They left Capetown on 27th August

Digitized by Google

for an "unknown destination." In the first line of transports were the "Kenilworth Castle," "Guildford Castle" and the "Ghoorkha"; while the "Balmoral Castle," "Dunluce Castle" and the "Briton" formed the second line.

The troops on board practically represented all arms of the Service, for they comprised the 2nd Battalion Queen's Regiment (Royal West Surrey Regiment) and part of the 2nd Bedfords, married families and Departmental Corps; Royal Field Artillery and 55th Company Royal Engineers, 10th Hussars, 1st Dragoons, 1st South Staffords, 7th Signal Company R.E., and Detachment R.A.M. Corps.(1)

Voyage to England.

On September 1st the transports and escorts arrived at St. Helena at 9 p.m., and remained there for the night, leaving next day at 1 p.m. While here the Captains of the various boats and the Commanding Officers of the Regiments were ordered to attend on board H.M. "Leviathan," which here relieved the "Astra," the latter returning to Capetown with the mails. No one was allowed to land.

On September 6th they crossed the line, but it is not on record that the time-honoured customs usually practised on board ship in "crossing the line" were indulged in by the crews.

The voyage was uneventful, no hostile craft being seen, but little incidents, such as the change of escort, were of interest. On September 11th the "Hyacinth" was relieved by H.M.S. "Europa," and on September 13th H.M.S. "Carnarvon" relieved the "Leviathan." On the 15th September H.M.S. "Carnarvon" left for Gibraltar, and the only escort was H.M.S. "Europa."

Later, the fleet of transports was met by two French cruisers off Ushant, one of which left almost at once, the other remaining until the Isle of Wight was sighted on September 18th. They arrived at Southampton on September 19th, and disembarked at 2 p.m. The married families of the Battalion were sent direct to their homes immediately on landing; and the Battalion received orders to march to Lyndhurst Camp in the New Forest, where the whole of the 7th Division were concentrated; and it was appointed one of the four Regiments of the 22nd Infantry Brigade.

The 7th Division.

The 7th Division, destined to win immortal fame, was commanded by Major-General T. Capper, C.B., D.S.O., it comprised the 20th, 21st and 22nd Infantry Brigades. The 1st South Staffords formed part of the 22nd Brigade, and were

(1) Diary, *ex.* inform. Brig.-General R. M. Ovens, C.M.G.

Digitized by Google

brigaded with the 2nd Royal Warwicks, 2nd "Queen's" Royal West Surrey Regiment and the 1st Royal Welsh Fusiliers, Brigadier-General S. T. B. Lawford being in command. During the period of mobilisation the troops underwent a severe test of training, marching and preparing for moving at any moment. The Battalion nearly all received new clothing and boots; and all unserviceable equipment was replaced by new web equipment during their stay at Lyndhurst; while the Officers and men were granted short leave to go and say farewell to their families and friends.

Lyndhurst Camp.

The transport of the Brigade was not by any means complete, but on October 1st the Division was inspected by General Capper in full Service order, with the animals and transport complete and ready for Service. Most of the Regiments in the Division had been in England from seven to ten days longer than the 1st South Staffords, but they, true to their old traditions, were the first Regiment to complete and be ready for Service; they were congratulated by the Brigadier for their good work.

On the 4th October the Division was again inspected by Major-General Capper, and while on parade, orders were received for the 7th Division to embark that day at Southampton. The Regiment left Lyndhurst Camp at 10 p.m., by half Battalions; the right half under Lieut.-Colonel R. M. Ovens, and the left under Major A. C. Buckle.

It was a cold wet night, but in spite of the discomfort, all ranks bore it cheerfully, and marched to Southampton, arriving there at 3 a.m., where they embarked on the "Lake Michigan." The Regiment was up to full strength, consisting of 29 Officers and 1,013 other ranks. A billeting party, consisting of Captain F. H. White (the Quartermaster) and four Company Quartermaster-Sergeants, went on in advance by the first transport to arrange for billets for the Battalion on arrival in Belgium.

Embark at Southampton.

Captain H. de Trafford, two Subalterns and 100 rank and file remained at Lyndhurst as the first reinforcement, and to form a nucleus for future new drafts.

The following Officers went out with the 1st Battalion from Lyndhurst on October 4th, 1914:—

Lieut.-Colonel R. M. Ovens (Commanding).

Major A. C. Buckle (Senior Major).
,, S. C. Welchman.
,, J. F. Loder-Symonds.

Digitized by Google

Captain G. S. Bonner (Adjutant).
,, J. F. Vallentin.
,, V. de Trafford.
,, G. C. Ransford.
,, J. S. S. Dunlop.
,, C. H. Green.

Personnel of Officers.

Lieut. W. A. P. Foster.
,, L. F. Holmes.
,, C. B. Adams.
,, H. K. Shore.
,, C. F. Crousaz.
,, G. C. Hume.
,, L. C. Moor-Radford.
,, D. C. Evans.
,, D. C. Twiss.
,, H. W. MacGeorge.
,, C. R. C. Bean.
,, C. F. C. Bartlett.
,, H. S. Bower.

Captain F. H. White (Quartermaster).

2nd Lieut. F. R. J. Tomlinson.
,, H. Willoughby.
,, H. J. Burke.
,, G. Archer-Shee.
,, R. R. Riley.
,, G. E. Parker.

} These joined at Lyndhurst Camp, England.

The transports reached Dover on the night of October 5th, and stayed there for one day, when they left under Sealed Orders for an unknown port; nobody knowing whether they were going to disembark in France or Belgium; but at daybreak on the morning of October 7th they reached Zeebrugge, and disembarked at midday. They were the last Battalion to arrive there. After getting the horses, waggons, etc., unloaded, they left Zeebrugge about 2 p.m., by train for Bruges, where they detrained and marched to Oost Camp, and found that every arrangement had been made for their comfort by the advance billeting party.

38th in Belgium.

The 22nd Brigade were at Bruges, but the 1st South Staffords found on arrival that special orders had been issued for the Regiment to march to Lophem, three miles from Oost Camp, and billet there. While here, most of the Battalion were on outpost duty or in reserve. "A" and "B" Companies were on outpost duty. Battalion Headquarters were at the Mayor of Lophem's chateau.

Next morning they stood to arms at 3 a.m. It was a bitterly cold morning.

Digitized by Google

The same day, October 8th, they marched from Lophem to the Canal outside Ostend, a distance of over 26 miles, in bad weather, and over a bad road (a Belgian Chausée), many of the men suffered from sore feet during this trying march; a malady from which they did not recover until they reached Ypres, after undergoing even worse trials.

The roads were packed with fugitives from Antwerp, and during the march they met the Belgian soldiers who had been relieved from Antwerp by the Naval Brigade. Haggard in looks, broken in spirit, by the terrific bombardment of the Germans, these men presented a pitiable sight, and plainly showed the trials and hardships they had endured; but the sight of them only stimulated the British troops to greater endeavours.

On arrival at their destination, "C" and "D" Companies were put on outpost duty, and had instructions for the outpost line to look out for and expect trouble from the enemy. The remnant of the Belgian Army outpost line joined "D" Company under Captain J. F. Vallentin. Nothing of importance happened, and the next day, October 9th, they marched to Ostend, to the main Square, and remained there for about three hours, when the Regiment entrained for Ghent, arriving there at 3.30 p.m., they marched to the outskirts of the town and halted in the garden of a private house, where they remained with the 2nd "Queen's" Regiment. Everyone thought that the Regiment was going to Antwerp and had stopped at Ghent. In the evening the sound of artillery and rifle fire was heard quite plainly. It was understood that this was one of the Brigades of the 7th Division in action (21st Brigade probably). "B" Company, under Captain Dunlop, was on the outpost line guarding the house the Regiment remained in. It rained in torrents the whole time, and everything was very wet and miserable, for the men had been without rations for the whole day. Fortunately, bread and German sausage was brought up by train by the Staff Officer, Captain Barker, and issued by the Quartermaster to the men, who were very thankful to get it.

38th at Ghent.

The 7th Division had been allotted the task of covering the withdrawal from Antwerp, and at 11 p.m. on October 9th, Lieut.-Colonel R. M. Ovens called the Officers together, and briefly explained the orders he had received, which were as follows:—

"The South Staffords were to be in position by 4 a.m., on the near side of the bridge which crosses the Canal at Swynearde; the Belgians were to cross the bridge and fight a rearguard action, and the Warwicks' and the Queens' were to do an attack on the left. This bridge was undoubtedly most

Digitized by Google

important, as it was on the main road to Ghent. The Royal Welsh Regiment were to go out and take up position in reserve towards Melle."(1)

Covering Withdrawal from Antwerp.

Quoting again the Diary of those days—"About 7 a.m., on the 11th October, a couple of guns fired, which were looked upon as the usual greetings on service to one another." It was a great sight to see the men putting the houses just near the bridge in a state of defence. "In one Company the Officer in Command told me he experienced great difficulty in getting the men to start this work of destruction, in knocking the houses to pieces, making loopholes and dismantling the houses generally; meanwhile the owners of the houses were making coffee and giving it to the troops.

"It was the first time that the whole of the Battalion, except 'C' Company, were in trenches, which they had admirably made.

"They were all so very good that it was hard to differentiate as to the best Company. These trenches excited the admiration of the Belgian soldiers who were co-operating in this district. A Belgian Officer who subsequently occupied these trenches with his Company said that although heavily shelled by the Germans after the bridge had been destroyed, they suffered practically few or no casualties; which says a great deal for the good work the 1st South Staffords had done."(2)

Two Platoons of "C" Company took up positions, one under Lieutenant Evans at Hautsepot, and the other at Maelte, under Captain C. H. Green and 2nd Lieut. H. J. Burke.

During the evening of the 10th October, heavy firing was heard in front of the position, and the Regiment stood to arms and remained so for some time, till the firing died down about 3 a.m.

It was afterwards learned that the French Marines were firing on the Warwick Regiment, whom they had mistaken for the enemy; fortunately, there were no casualties.

The next day, Sunday, the Battalion, who had been without rest for two or three days, constantly at work, or on outpost duty, also without any food for 20 hours, were in for another trying march. There was occasional rifle firing, and shortly after mid-day, "C" Company rejoined the Regiment, and the whole Battalion, under Lieut.-Colonel R. M. Ovens, less "A" Company under Major S. C. Welchman and Captain V. de Trafford, advanced about three miles over the bridge of the

(1) Diary, *ex.* inform. Brig.-General R. M. Ovens, C.M.G.
(2) *Ibid.*

Digitized by Google

Canal to a spot just south of Haywyk, where they joined up with the 1st Royal Warwicks.

It was then discovered that the enemy, who had fallen back the day previous, was concentrating his Forces—amounting approximately to about 30,000—on our immediate front. General Sir H. Rawlinson, the Divisional Commander, then decided that the Warwicks and the Queen's Regiment were to entrench their position to the south-east of the village of Haywyk, and remain there until dark, and then withdraw back to Ghent. The idea was that the Division should fall back, and take up another position east of the Lys Canal. The 1st South Staffords, who were on the high ground at Hansbeke, were ordered to withdraw to Swynearde, and hold their original position at all costs until about 9 p.m., when Sir Henry Rawlinson would send instructions regarding the blowing up of the bridge, which had been previously prepared for demolition by the Royal Engineers. The demolition of this bridge—which was a very long iron girder one—it was hoped would seriously delay the advance of the enemy when the British retired to Ghent.

The Battalion left their positions at 9.45 p.m., and the Royal Engineers blew up the nearest section of the bridge on the Ghent side. The explosion was terrific, and shattered the windows of the houses at least 500 yards from the bridge, the noise being heard in Ghent. The inhabitants, alarmed by the explosion, speedily removed their goods and chattels to Ghent, as soon as the Regiment left Swynearde. The Regiment marched via Ghent, where they halted for about an hour; meanwhile the transport of the Division had been moved hurriedly along the Hansbeke road, and the troops followed. Battalions being closed right up on one another.

Bridge Blown up by British.

The German pressure continued, and the troops marched all night to Hansbeke, a distance of 16 miles. The 1st South Staffords occupied the post of honour as rearguard to the French, Belgian and British troops.

Without rest for at least two or three days, harassed by the enemy, who were in great strength, and without food for 20 hours, the march was very trying. Officers and men were quite exhausted, falling asleep at every halt, even at temporary checks.

None of the Regiments of the 22nd Brigade, who took part in this retirement, will ever forget that trying march of 16 miles.

The Brigade halted at Overbrock at 6.30 a.m., in a very thick mist, the weather being fearfully cold. The Battalion had breakfast, and every man was asleep in a very short time.

Digitized by Google

About 11.30 a.m. a German Taube was seen flying over the village, and the 1st South Staffords received orders to march at 1 p.m. All idea of defending Hansbeke was abandoned, and the march was resumed at 1 p.m., and continued throughout the day, via Bellem, Aeltre, Ruysclede to Thielt, the latter place being reached at 9 p.m. The Officers and men were quite fagged out, for the march was a very hard one; they had only three to four hours rest, and had covered a distance of 32 miles in 24 hours. The men were so tired and done up, they wanted no food, but just dropped down and fell asleep whenever they could.

The 1st South Staffords were billeted in a college at Thielt; the Officers occupying a large dormitory at the top of the building, enjoying the luxury of the first bed for some weeks.

At 6 a.m. next morning heavy firing brought everybody out, and it was thought that the Germans had got into the town, but it afterwards transpired that the firing was done by the French Marines, who had brought down a German aeroplane, much to the joy of the troops.

While at Thielt the Battalion heard of the capture of Antwerp by the Germans. They remained in billets there until 12 noon, where every Officer, N.C.O. and man had a good rest, a splendid meal, and above all else, the luxury of a thorough good wash.

The March to Ypres.

The men of the 1st South Staffords, like their comrades of the 2nd Battalion, when retreating from Mons, thought that their march was somewhat in the nature of a flight, but they now discovered that the 7th Division, of which they formed part, had done good work in assisting the British Naval Brigade (*i.e.* 4,000 men) and the Belgian Forces to escape from Antwerp after destroying stores, ammunition, bridges and other munitions of war. This march from Ghent to Thielt was 36 miles, and the Battalion did it in 23½ hours, a very fine performance.

On the 13th October the 7th Division left Thielt at 11 a.m. and marched in a drizzling rain to Bevering, which was reached very late at night, the Battalion billeted in a small village, while "A" Company, under Major J. F. Loder-Symonds, went out on outpost duty.

There was no food for the Battalion, and Major A. C. Buckle, the second in command, was up all night commandeering all possible food for the Battalion; this ration was issued at a very early hour, the Companies who had been on outpost work getting their portion when they rejoined the Battalion at 3 a.m.

Digitized by Google

The march to Bevering was a heavy one, 24 miles on a bad road, which delayed the Column considerably, for the men had to man-handle the waggons out of the heavy mud, no easy task with an energetic enemy pressing on behind, and in the damp and darkness of a stormy night.

They left Bevering at 5 a.m. on October 14th, and marched to Roulers. Here, half of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers and the Queen's Royal West Surrey Regiment were taken by train to Ypres.

The 2nd Warwicks and the 1st South Staffords marched to Ypres, about 17 miles. During the march very heavy firing was heard coming from the direction of Armentieres, where the other British Divisions were engaged. On arrival at Ypres the Battalion got into very comfortable billets, thanks to the billeting party under Captain F. H. White, who was an ideal Quartermaster, as the Diarist records: "No Battalion, I am quite certain, was ever better served than we were, billets and good food, if unbounded tact and smartness on the part of Captain White could secure them for us. A better Quartermaster does not exist in the Army."(1)

Ypres, 1914.

The little city of Ypres stands midway between the industrial region of the River Lys, on the South, and the cultivated flat lands round the river Yser to the north-west. In olden times it was the seat of the wool trade in Flanders, but when the "Merchant Staple" was removed to England, the City declined in power. Its noble Cloth Hall, dating from the 12th Century, testifies to its merchants' ancient pre-eminence.

South-east of the town, about two miles away, is the little mining village of St. Eloi; in front of the town, to the east side, lie the villages of Hooge, Gheluvelt and Kruseik; while to the north-east are the villages of Becelaere and Zonnebeke, leading to the Passchendaele Ridge. This was the country in which the 7th Division were engaged in stemming the terrific attack made by the Germans in their attempt to reach Calais and the Channel Ports.

Two attacks had already been attempted by the Germans to break through; first against the remnants of the Belgian Army under King Albert, and the second against the French Army that filled in the gap between the Belgian and British front: it was realised that on the failure of these two attacks the Germans would make another attempt at a point where they hoped to win through.

(1) Brig.-General R. M. Ovens', C.M.G., Diary.

Digitized by Google

The Battalion met in Ypres, for the first time, the French 87th Division. The Headquarters of the 7th Division were located in Ypres, and the 1st South Staffords, with their Brigade, were billeted in the town for the night. Next morning, at 8 a.m., they moved to the south-west outskirts of the town, and later, moved out to the Zonnebeke road; where they remained until 8 p.m., returning to Ypres, and billeting in the main street for the night.

On October 15th Lieut.-Colonel R. M. Ovens called a meeting of the Officers at Battalion Headquarters, at 2 a.m., and explained the situation, and how he proposed to carry out the orders received from Brig.-General Lawford.

These instructions were as follows:—The French were occupying a position from St. Julien to Langemarck and Bixshoete, and the British Cavalry were allotted the area from Zandvoorde to Becelaere; while the 22nd Brigade were to go to Zonnebeke to prepare and entrench a strong position, as information had been received that there was a German Division in Menin; which Sir Henry Rawlinson was ordered to attack in conjunction with the 87th French Division. The position was as follows:—The Royal Warwicks were on outpost duty on the Zonnebeke road, about a mile east of Ypres. The Royal Welsh Fusiliers, who moved forward in front, had orders to get in touch with the enemy, who was supposed to be near Zonnebeke. The 1st South Staffords were in support of the Welsh Fusiliers, and the Queen's Regiment were on the Fusiliers' right. The Battalion moved at 3 a.m., there was a heavy mist, but they advanced straight up the road, meeting with no opposition, and only a few Germans were seen by the advance Battalion. They remained there until about 10.30 a.m., when they moved up to their position at Zonnebeke, and entrenched. "A" Company occupied the left of the line near the school, which was the Battalion Headquarters, "B" Company prolonged the line to the right. "D" Company next on the right in touch with the Wiltshire Regiment (of the 21st Infantry Brigade), while "C" Company remained in reserve behind "D" Company. There was continuous rifle fire the whole night, caused chiefly by the Wiltshire Regiment. Next day was spent in improving trenches and generally tidying up. On the 18th October the Battalion had to act as flank guard to the 21st Brigade, and marched forward to Molenhoek and entrenched for the night. Sir Henry Rawlinson had received orders to seize the crossing of the Lys at Menin, where there was supposed to be one German Division, and await the support of the 1st Corps under Sir Douglas Haig, which was due in two days.

In Front of Ypres.

The task was an impossible one, for the 7th Division had to operate on a twenty mile front, with no hope of support until

Digitized by Google

Sir Douglas Haig arrived. Sir H. Rawlinson knew also of the presence of the four new German Army Corps operating at Courtrai.

"D" Company of the South Staffords, under Captain J. F. Vallentin pushed forward to Strooiboomhoek, but did not come in contact with the enemy, rejoining the Battalion as reserve the same night. Three armoured motor cars, manned by Officers and men of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines, passed through Dadizeele, and came in touch with a Company of German Infantry in the direction of Kleyhoek, losing two men killed.

On the 19th October the 22nd Brigade were ordered to attack Kleyhoek, where an aeroplane had located German trenches on the main Roulers-Menin road, very near to Menin.

This was the nearest point the 7th Division got towards Menin, for their progress was stopped by the advance of enormous masses of German troops from Courtrai. They had to fall back at once to avoid disaster, and entrenched themselves on an eight mile front, east of the Gheluvelt cross-roads. They did not then realise the supreme efforts they would have to make in stemming the tide of the German attempt to capture Ypres, and break through to the Channel Ports.

The Bedford Regiment, attacking a position near a windmill south-west of Gheluvelt, lost Lieut. Bell and six men killed and four wounded. Lieut. Bell, formerly a corporal in the 2nd South Staffords, had obtained a commission in the Bedfords, and only recently joined them.

First Battle of Ypres, 1914.

(1)"This day the Battalion was in Brigade Reserve. The plan of operations was as follows:—The Queen's Regiment were to advance on Kleyhoek with their right resting on the Menin-Roulers road. The Royal Welsh Fusiliers on their right. The Royal Warwicks were supporting the firing line and the Staffords were in Brigade Reserve. The move of the Brigade was very early, at 4 a.m., the Staffords halting at Strooiboomhoek for a couple of hours. We then marched through Dadizeele and halted in a field the other side of the village. We remained there for about 1½ hours. We then received orders to reinforce the Brigade. The Battalion moved forward with 'A' and 'B' on the right and 'C' and 'D' Companies on the left, until we reached the windmill hill, which had been previously occupied by the Germans, who had been turned out by the Royal Welsh Fusiliers. The Battalion then came under a heavy shell fire (shrapnel) both from the front and

(1) Brig.-General R. M. Ovens', C.M.G., Diary, 1914, p. 8.

Digitized by Google

left flanks. An airman reported that strong Forces of Germans were advancing from Courtrai to try and cut us off. On the front line of the Battalion reaching the crest of the hill an order was passed down from the right to retire. The retirement was carried out by Companies, with the exception of 30 men of 'C' Company, under Major J. F. Loder-Symonds, who received no authentic order, and continued to advance to a wood which had also been taken by our Battalion and the Welsh Fusiliers, and remained about a quarter of an hour, whilst Lieut. D. C. Evans went and ascertained from a Captain of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers what the orders were, and he told Lieut. D. C. Evans that they had just received orders for them to retire. This Welsh Fusilier Officer was killed that day. A pair of German wire-cutters were picked up by one of our Officers in the wood, and were found of the utmost value. This party of 30 men then retired, still under heavy shell fire, and eventually rejoined the Queen's Regiment, outside Dadizeele, who were fighting a rearguard action.

First Battle of Ypres, 1914.

"This was the first occasion on which the Battalion was moving together in 'artillery formation' under a heavy cross fire, and the coolness and steadiness of all ranks at once stamped them as worthy to inherit, and capable of adding to, the great honours and traditions of the immortal old 38th and 80th Regiments of Staffordshire.

"The Battalion entrenched in front of Strooiboomhoek and covered the retirement of the transport of the 7th Division. Our casualties were only six wounded this day. About 4.30 p.m., what was thought to be a friendly aeroplane flew over our lines, and as it went over the cross roads in Strooiboomhoek dropped a bomb, which fell near the General Staff of the 22nd Brigade. Our General, Brig.-General S. T. B. Lawford, had a very narrow escape.

"It is interesting to note that during the attack in the morning, Major J. F. Loder-Symonds, who was with the 30 men left as stated before, advanced at first in an expeditious manner, in short rushes across 400 yards of ploughed land. He soon got tired of this, owing to heavy accoutrements, rucksack, etc., and then went to the other extreme. He slung his rifle and walked slowly on without deigning to notice any shells, etc., which burst around his feet. He went about like this till we reached the enemy's position, which had by then been evacuated, and a look of intense boredom was on his face the whole time. Having covered the entrenchment of the 7th Division from Strooiboomhoek, the Battalion retired to a temporary position at Molenhoek, we occupying our old trenches there for about two hours. We then fell back to Zonnebeke, and again took up the defensive positions the

Digitized by Google

Regiments had previously held, and commenced to improve the positions. That night the Colonel, Bonner, Green and Evans slept on the floor of a deserted inn. One of the party had a nightmare, and thought he should get back to the trenches. He only got as far as Evans' bed, who soon transferred him to Burke's, whose kit he had thrown into the middle of the room. Shortly after this his attention was attracted by snoring, which he decided must be stopped at once; he thereupon proceeded to violently kick the accused, and ended by pulling his leg and waking him. Before the accused was properly awakened the somnambulist got back to bed. The Colonel on waking up had pulled his Balaclava helmet down around his neck, and he then got up and accused each in turn of stealing the helmet. After the beds and persons of all the Officers concerned had been searched, it was decided to abandon the search in view of the very heavy firing which had gone on the whole of the time. The Officers then left the inn and went to the trenches, and on getting outside the Colonel found the Balaclava helmet around his neck. All Officers were then exonerated, and the incident was closed amidst salvoes from the artillery and rifles of both sides."(1)

Comedy of the Balaclava Helmet.

By the 20th October the whole Allied line was held from Albert to the Sea near Nieuport, and in a position to meet the desperate effort of the Germans to regain the initiative and the offensive they had lost at the battle of the Marne; and right in front, forming the point of the Ypres Salient was the 7th Division, east of the Gheluvelt cross roads. The line was terribly thin, and the British front was so attenuated that they could only supply less than two rifles per yard of front, while the German Forces opposed to them were about five to one.

The morning of the 20th October began with a vigorous bombardment by the Germans, who attacked all day with their Artillery and Infantry. The Battalion lost three men who were out scouting in the wood in front of the trenches, and the Germans got up to within about 300 yards of the 1st South Staffords' trenches, but could make no further progress. Firing continued all night, and the enemy made two attempts during the night to try and reconnoitre the position, but failed. The Battalion had now been in action for three days, and the men were beginning to feel tired, but greater trials awaited them, and a greater test was put on their endurance the next few days, for on October 21st, at daylight, the Germans attacked in tremendous numbers, accompanied by a furious onslaught of Artillery, which continued the whole day until 4 p.m.

Germans Attack in Force.

(1) Extract, Brig.-General Ovens', C.M.G., Diary, pp. 8, 9.

Digitized by Google

"The attack was pressed in deadly earnest, and the 22nd Infantry Brigade only kept back the invading flood of the enemy by the first practical demonstration of those astonishing fighting powers which were henceforth to be associated with the name of the 7th Division."(1)

The main fighting was along the front of the 7th Division, against which was thrown the bulk of four new German Corps. The 1st South Staffords had good shooting, for the German masses could be plainly seen from 300 to 500 yards' range, and the Battalion took a heavy toll of the enemy. The shells were continually falling on either side of the Staffords' trenches, for the trenches were so scientifically constructed by all ranks of this famous old Regiment, that the Germans never got the proper range. Machine gun fire from a position they could not locate, and sniping from a farm house on their right front, worried them a lot. Altogether things were very unpleasant. Drummers Wheeler and Arnold were killed by snipers, and Lieut. D. C. Evans was wounded.

"At 4 p.m., the Queen's and Welsh Fusiliers on our left were driven back, leaving the left flank exposed, and in the darkness the German Infantry got round out left flank, it was a very dark night."

First Battle of Ypres, 1914.

The 1st Battalion was enfiladed by a German movement against Zonnebeke, and for a time looked like having its flank turned, but a fresh disposal of the Battalion on the extreme left of the position restored the situation.

Battalion Headquarters, in St. Joseph's School, were shelled all the morning, and at 11.30 a.m., after most of the Officers' chargers and transport horses, which were sheltering behind the School, had been killed by shell-fire, Headquarters were forced to leave and go into "A" Company's trenches, but before leaving Colonel R. M. Ovens, Major A. C. Buckle and Captain G. S. Bonner collected a number of signallers and cooks, and with Segt.-Major Baker, firing from the windows of the School, tried to put out of action a German field battery at about 1,200 yards' range, on their left, which was doing considerable damage to the Royal Welsh Fusiliers. They accounted for a good many Germans, but failed to silence the battery, which continued to fire. The Welsh Fusiliers trenches were smashed up by "Jack Johnsons" and other heavy shells, and they suffered severely. Meanwhile the 1st South Staffords had some good shooting, for the Germans were in such masses that it was impossible to miss them. Lieut. L. F. Holmes, who had done excellent work in scouting through the wood in front of his section of the trenches, and

(1) The First Seven Divisions, p. 186.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



CAPTAIN A. F. G. KILBY, V.C.

PLATE 10.



Photo. *Country Life.*

CAPTAIN J. F. VALLENTIN, V.C.

To face p. 145.

Digitized by Google

had been looking after and superintending a machine gun, which did good service, was unfortunately killed while he was taking observation. Lce.-Corporal Protherick (of the band) was also wounded whilst carrying a wounded man out of the firing line.

Battle of Gheluvelt.

On the right flank of the Battalion, Captain G. C. Ransford was wounded. While taking an observation through his glasses, a shot struck them in the middle, wounding his hand, but with his arm in a sling he remained with his Company and encouraged them to "stick it." Sergeant F. Bytheway and his machine gun section did great work against the Germans.

The 1st South Staffords and their comrades of the 7th Division more than justified their title to fame by the work they did this day in stemming the tide of the German hordes.

The following General Order from Major-General T. Capper, C.B., D.S.O. (G.O.C. 7th Division), shows how their valour was appreciated:—

> "The Major-General Commanding desires to express his satisfaction at the manner in which the troops under his command have held their own in spite of the severe shell fire and Infantry attacks to which they have been subjected. The eventual success of the Commander-in-Chief's plans is dependant on the maintenance for several days of the present position, and he confides in the troops of the 7th Division to do their duty in holding it.
>
> L. M. de Montgomery,
> Colonel.
> Gen. Staff, 7th Division.
>
> Ypres.
> Menin Road, 21.10.14."

General Capper's call on the troops under his command was worthily responded to by these steady old county Regiments, for "they opposed the blood and iron of the German onslaught with a stronger blood and a finer steel." Well might Sir John French say in his despatch:—"I venture to predict that the deeds during these days of stress and trial will furnish some of the most brilliant chapters to be found in the military history of our times."

Thursday, October 22nd, was a heavy day all along the line, the 7th Division was in sore straits, for they had been fighting night and day for five days, they were getting exhausted, and their casualties were heavy.

At 4 a.m. this day the 1st South Staffords had orders to retire, the other Regiments having moved and left them alone.

Digitized by Google

During this retirement the Battalion lost the greater portion of its transport, the supplies for the day were lost, stores, and records, including the mobilisation papers of the Battalion. The Officers lost the whole of their kits, and were left with practically what they stood up in.

It was a question of falling back to a fresh position, and to try to get the transport away first would have given the whole show away to the enemy. Colonel R. M. Ovens decided that it was better to move the men back safely, and then with an escort, try and rush the transport back, but in the meantime the Germans had crept up to the houses and attacked in great numbers, capturing the transport and causing serious loss to the escort and drivers. The whole Battalion was safely retired across country, and Colonel R. M. Ovens was complimented by General S. T. B. Lawford on his skill in extricating the Battalion from its forward and quite isolated position, which all ranks had held with the greatest valour.

Germans Capture Transport and Stores.

They were now without ammunition carts or pack animals, and all the Officers' chargers had been killed at Zonnebeke. It was an awful time, the men had nothing to eat and had not slept for three nights, the appearance of both Officers and men was pitiable, for practically all had lost their great coats and equipment, to say nothing of other comforts, "and they certainly were not pleased with the Germans!"

The Battalion now took up a position with the remainder of the 22nd Brigade on a long line in difficult wooded country round Veldhoek. They were a bit mixed up, Companies of one Corps were entrenched with other Corps, and the whole thing was tangled up, but this was unavoidable owing to the losses sustained. Companies from various Battalions were flung into the firing line irrespective of Brigades, the main thing was to stop the German advance. Help they badly needed, but they were encouraged and inspired by the news of Sir Douglas Haig's First Army Corps coming to their support. A diarist records that "this night things were rather quiet and not much rifle fire."

Fighting Round Veldhoek.

Next day, 23rd October, there was a severe frontal attack on the 7th Division, the Bedfords managed to close the gap between the Yorkshires and the Royal Scots Fusiliers (21st Brigade), but the Wiltshires, forming the point of the salient, once again had the hardest part of the fight. The whole position was desperate, and Captain J. S. S. Dunlop, with part of "B" Company and 2nd Lieuts. G. Archer-Shee and C. F. C. Bartlett, went up to the Wiltshires (21st Brigade) who had been under very heavy fire. Part of the 1st South Staffords got into the Wiltshire trenches and remained there

Digitized by Google

all day, saving the situation. The rest of the 1st South Staffords Battalion were in Polygon Woods with some of the Warwicks, Queens, and two Companies of Scots Guards (20th Brigade).

After darkness set in Captain J. S. S. Dunlop retired his Company and rejoined the 1st Battalion.

Next day, 24th October, Lieut. C. F. C. Bartlett was twice buried in a trench by "Jack Johnsons," but managed to extricate himself with great difficulty. As showing how the Germans adopted methods against the rules, this day some men of the Queen's Regiment caught a German sniper dressed in one of our dead men's khaki uniform. He was shot.

Sir D. Haig's First Army had now arrived from the Aisne area, and the 2nd Division took over the front line from the left of the 7th Division. Lieut.-Colonel R. M. Ovens handed over the part of the line of defence in Polygon Wood to Lieut.-Colonel W. S. Bannaytyne and the King's Liverpool Regiment (6th Brigade), who relieved the 1st South Staffords in this sector of the line. Unfortunately Lieut.-Colonel W. S. Bannaytyne, a very gallant leader, was killed, shot through the heart about dusk. Regiments were mixed up anyhow, but the line had to be held, and early in the morning of the 24th "B" Company, 1st South Staffords, under the command of Captain J. S. S. Dunlop and Lieuts. C. F. C. Bartlett and C. G. Hume, went out to reinforce the Northumberland Hussars, who were in the wood on the right of Battalion Headquarters. Just as they advanced to reinforce, an order was given to retire to the road near the wood until our Artillery had finished shelling the position in front, they then advanced and joined on to the Worcester Regiment (5th Brigade). In front of this position was a farm house occupied by Germans with a machine gun, the house was in a kind of clearing in the middle of the wood, and "B" Company, 1st South Staffords, were ordered to capture it. Led by Captain J. S. S. Dunlop, who cried "Come on, men!" they charged and took it, and then advanced into the wood, driving the Germans out. Unfortunately Captain J. S. S. Dunlop was killed as the Staffords were clearing the house, while Sergeant Mason was also severely wounded.

Fighting in Polygon Wood.

"Capt. J. S. S. Dunlop's death cast a gloom over the Battalion, for no Regiment ever possessed a more universally beloved Officer, his men adored him, for he was kindness personified."

Pte. John Jones, of Captain Dunlop's Company, describes how his Officer was killed. He writes:—"One of the bravest was our Captain, and as good as a father to all his men. I

Digitized by Google

shall always remember when he got killed. Having got through a wood (Polygon Wood) alright, we started to advance across a ploughed field. We had no sooner got into the open than the Germans began shelling us, they had got the range. I had just dropped down when a shell burst behind me, and the force of the explosion hurled a pig about ten yards, the animal landing near me. Though surprised for a moment I found the carcase useful cover. Our Captain was a man who knew his work, and the men would go anywhere with him. The order was given for a bayonet charge, and we had not gone far across the ploughed field before the Captain was killed. When he was killed I think our fellows went mad. They gave the Germans something to go on with, the place swarmed with dead after the charge. When we got back to where the Captain lay some of our fellows had a job to keep tears from their eyes, they loved him so well."

38th and 80th in Front Line, Ypres.

October 24th was a record day for the South Staffordshire Regiment, for now that the 2nd Division of the 1st Army Corps had joined up to the left wing of the sorely tried 7th Division, for the first time in the history of this war, the old 38th and 80th, 1st and 2nd South Staffords, had the unique experience of fighting side by side. It was a red letter day, and everyone was delighted at seeing some of the old familiar faces again. The men cheered each other, and cracked jokes over their experiences.

After being relieved by the King's Liverpool Regiment, the 1st South Staffords fell back into temporary reserve, remaining there until midnight. They had their first issue of rum this night, it was badly needed and thoroughly appreciated.

Next day, Sunday, October 25th, the British attack was continued by the 2nd Division, assisted by French Territorials, on the left of the 7th Division's line. This counter-attack temporarily succeeded, capturing some guns and a number of German prisoners. In the centre itself, the Germans appeared unable to follow up their success in Polygon Wood.

During this attack by the 2nd Division, the 1st South Staffords were in the wood near to Brigade Headquarters, just off the Ypres road, and during the afternoon the Germans attempted a great enveloping attack on the salient held by the 20th Brigade at Kruseik, north-east of Zandvoorde, on the right of the 1st Division.

The 1st South Staffords were sent to act as Reserve Battalion to the 20th Brigade, and during the confused and sanguinary fighting of October 25th and 26th, they at one time or another, had to support each of the four units of this Brigade.

Digitized by Google

At 4 a.m. the 1st South Staffords were moved off towards Kruseik and attached to the 20th Brigade. "D" Company, under Captain G. C. Ransford, was left under Colonel Earle, who commanded the Grenadier Guards. He was a son of General Earle, Commander in the Nile Campaign of 1884-85, who, with Colonel Eyre, commanding the 38th, was killed at the Battle of Kirbekan.

The rest of the Battalion was entrenched at the bottom of the hill behind the Grenadiers' section, and near to Brigade Headquarters. "A" Company dug trenches along the road, and "B" and "C" Companies occupied the bombproof shelters near the Battalion Headquarters. During the night of October 25th "D" Company, South Staffords, who were in Reserve with the Grenadiers, were ordered to go up and reinforce the firing line, and after being there some time, they captured 19 Germans who had managed to penetrate behind the Grenadiers' trenches, they also surprised a patrol of German snipers and took them prisoners. Captain G. C. Ransford and Lieut. D. C. Twiss moved on with two platoons of "D" Company, and after going forward about 250 yards, came under very heavy rifle fire from the Scots Guards' trench, which was now in the possession of the Germans. At the same time, the Scots Guards behind commenced firing, thinking it was the enemy. "D" Company was now between two fires, and Captain G. C. Ransford, although wounded a second time, told Lieut. D. C. Twiss to carry on while he went forward alone to reconnoitre the enemy's position. He was not seen afterwards. "Captain G. C. Ransford was a brave Officer who never spared himself, did his work excellently, and proved his capable leadership both on this day and other days previously."

Fighting at Kruseik.

This detachment of the 1st South Staffords was practically wiped out, for before midnight, Lieut. D. C. Twiss was wounded, and orders were brought back to 2nd Lieut. R. R. Riley to bring up the other two platoons of "D" Company to reinforce the party under Lieut. D. C. Twiss. While this movement was being carried out they unexpectedly came under heavy fire from the front. Thinking they were being fired on by their own men, they moved 70 yards to their left flank and got into the Grenadier Guards' trenches, remaining there until about an hour before dawn. During the night a party of Germans came up to the front of the trench, saying, "Don't shoot, we are Scots Guards and South Staffords!" but when within about a dozen yards of the trench their helmets were seen, and the 1st South Staffords poured in such a hot fire that the few of them that were left beat a hasty retreat.

1st Battalion's Loss.

After Captain G. C. Ransford had been killed, and Lieut. D. C. Twiss wounded, the remaining half of "D" Company,

Digitized by Google

under 2nd Lieut. R. R. Riley, after heroic endeavours were surrounded and captured. Major Viscount Dalrymple, M.P., of the Scots Guards, who was captured at the same time, in a letter he sent home afterwards, said:—"About 7 p.m. on the 26th October, shelling began, and there was a lot of sniping from the village at my right rear. Presently I saw about 60 Germans, who had been hiding, bolting across our rear, and, I think, between our fire and the German shells they must have been wiped out. Then the shelling got terrific, absolutely all over us. At one time for two consecutive minutes I counted over 60 shells a minute bursting within 50 yards or so of my trench. Our trench got pretty uninhabitable, fired at from front and rear and one flank, the shells coming thick all the time.

"Then word came from the trench on my left, held by a mixture of South Staffords, Grenadiers, and my men, that the Grenadiers on the left had retired. I shouted back that it was nonsense and to stick to the trenches and fire whenever opportunity offered. I did not think there could be any genuine attack until they stopped shelling us, about 3.30 I suddenly heard a bugle sounding 'Cease fire' on our right, and saw the next trench on the right full of Germans and our people surrendering. I could not very well fire on them then. We had strict orders to stick to our trenches, so did not like to retire, even if I had had any idea where to retire to, as the Germans were all round except on the left, and I think our people had gone from there.

First Battle of Ypres, 1914.

"I was marched off with about 60 men, most South Staffords and King's Company Grenadiers; and one South Stafford Subaltern (2nd Lieut. R. R. Riley). At a village some way off I found the rest of our people."

There was continuous heavy rain during the whole night, and at midnight "A" Company, under Major S. C. Welchman, reinforced the Border Regiment (20th Brigade). During the move up, they had to advance under a terrific hail of bullets, and Major Welchman ordered No. 2 Platoon, under Lieut. H. W. MacGeorge, to lie down in extended order, while he (the Major) went forward towards a farm house to ascertain if there were any Germans there. He found a wounded German, and shouted back, "There is only one wounded," and was returning, when No. 4 Platoon, under 2nd Lieut. F. R. J. Tomlinson, came towards the farm house and caught six German snipers in the vicinity. These were sent back to the 20th Brigade Headquarters. The 1st South Staffords then got into the Border Regiment's trenches, where they remained until 8 a.m. on the morning of the 26th October. The casualties here were heavy, Major S. C. Welch-

Digitized by Google

man and Lieut. H. W. MacGeorge were wounded during the night, and early in the morning 2nd Lieuts. F. R. J. Tomlinson and C. R. C. Bean were both hit in the leg by bullets, and were not seen afterwards. Later, it was ascertained that both these wounded Officers had been taken prisoners by the Germans.

"B" Company were used as patrol in rear of the Grenadiers' trenches in front of Gheluvelt, where they patrolled all night, returning to their own trenches near Battalion Headquarters in the morning.

"C" Company were also sent up at 7.30 p.m. to reinforce the Border Regiment. They had instructions from Major J. F. Loder-Symonds that the position was to be held at all costs. Early next morning a message was sent by them to Lieut.-Colonel R. M. Ovens asking for reinforcements. Half of "B" Company was despatched under Captain J. F. Vallentin to help them, and Major A. C. Buckle went with the party to take over command of part of the line. These two platoons of "B" Company suffered severe casualties, Lieut. G. C. Hume being killed and several other ranks killed and wounded. "Lieut. Hume, who did so well, was undoubtedly one of the pluckiest and cheeriest of Officers, and was smoking a cigarette at the time he was hit. He was always as cool as possible under fire, and was a favourite with all ranks."

Attack at Gheluvelt.

The same day, October 26th, Lieut.-Colonel R. M. Ovens and Captain G. S. Bonner were ordered by Brig.-General Ruggles-Brise (20th Brigade) to hold the trenches or position in rear of the Gordons, with the remainder of "B" and "C" Companies of the 1st South Staffords.

It was here, at a very critical moment in the ebb and flow of battle, that Colonel R. M. Ovens, who was at the time in an advanced position with these two Companies, saw a sort of general retirement. He sent Captain F. H. White to ascertain the reason for it, and found that an order had been received to "Retire." All the Corps, numbering about 300 Officers and men, were making a retirement in a disorderly mob. Captain F. H. White, suspecting it was a ruse on the part of the Germans, explained that no retirement had been ordered, and by super-human efforts succeeded in rallying the men and bringing them back into the firing line under a fearful shell and rifle fire. Every man was wanted, and as they were brought forward Colonel R. M. Ovens and Captain G. S. Bonner used them to reinforce the line in its thinnest part and keep the general line intact. "An act which had a marked effect on the fortunes of the day, or, rather, of the night."

Digitized by Google

These two days, October 25th and 26th, were the most trying days the 1st South Staffords had seen during this campaign, for the Germans had been pressing hard to push through the weak trenches, which were now very much reduced by the terrific shell fire. About 2 p.m. on the 26th, a party under Colonel R. M. Ovens and Captain J. S. Bonner, with Captain F. H. White (Quartermaster), took up a position along a ridge of ploughed land, and on the main road from Menin to Ypres, running north-east to Gheluvelt, where they held the road until nearly dark, in view of, it was thought, a forced retirement of the Brigade, which had suffered terribly. The Germans were then bursting their shrapnel beautifully on this ridge, and "Jack Johnsons" were falling beside the Staffords' hastily dug trenches. "Sergt.-Major J. Baker did splendid work on this occasion, fearlessly exposing himself in situations where he was under most dangerous fire from snipers and others. If any critical work had to be done he invariably volunteered for it."(1)

For the next two days there was little shelling on the front, but it was only a lull in the storm which was to break on the 29th with devastating energy. The Germans opposed to the British hitherto were mostly Line Regiments, but now the Prussian Guards had been brought up to accomplish under the eyes of their Emperor, what their comrades had failed to achieve.

The Germans, confident in their numbers, and strength of Artillery, attacked at two points, north between Zonnebeke and Becelaere, and south between Zandvoorde and Messines, while they drove hard against the point in front of Gheluvelt. Later, their main effort of concentration was on the left of the 7th Division.

Position on October 29th.

The position of the British line at mid-day on October 29th was as follows:—On the extreme left the 2nd Division joined up at Broadseinde with the 18th French Division just west of Moorslede; the 1st Division continued the line south, in front

---

(1) Official Record.
During these two days' desperate fighting, the 1st South Staffords suffered the following casualties:—
"A" Company.—Major S. C. Welchman, wounded. Lieut. H. W. MacGeorge, wounded. Captain V. de Trafford, prisoner. Lieut. C. R. C. Bean, wounded and prisoner. 2nd Lieut. F. R. J. Tomlinson, wounded and prisoner.
"B" Company.—Lieut. G. C. Hume, killed.
"C" Company.—Captain C. H. Green, wounded. Lieut. L. C. Moor-Radford, wounded and missing. Lieut. H. K. Shore, wounded.
"D" Company.—Captain G. C. Ransford, killed. Lieut. H. S. Bower, wounded. Lieut. D. C. Twiss, wounded. 2nd Lieut. R. R. Riley, prisoner.

Digitized by Google

of Polygon Wood down to Gheluvelt, from which point the line was carried on to Zandvoorde by the 7th Division, whose right joined up with the British 3rd Cavalry Division down to Hollebeke, the whole front forming an arc in front of Ypres.

The 7th Division, which for a month had been engaged in continuous marching and heavy fighting, was very weak, and as Sir Henry Rawlinson had returned to England to supervise the 8th Division, which was being mobilised under Major-General F. J. Davies, Sir John French decided to temporarily break up the 4th Corps, and place the 7th Division with the 1st Corps, under Sir Douglas Haig. The 3rd Cavalry Division was also detailed for duty with the 1st Corps. The situation was desperately critical, for the Germans, in addition to their superior numbers, had brought an immense weight of Artillery against the British, smashing up their trenches and making them untenable.

Punctually at 5.30 a.m. on the 29th the grand German assault began along and on each side of the Menin road, the direct and shortest route to Ypres, and the Germans, as was their way, went straight for the shortest cut, attacking between Kruiseik and Becelaere. With overwhelming numbers, and aided by fog, the Germans forced the line back, but not until the Battalions who opposed them were nearly annihilated.

The 1st South Staffords, in the 22nd Brigade, were in the left centre near Gheluvelt, and were hotly assailed, the Royal Welsh Fusiliers suffering terribly. What was left of them, mixed up with the 1st South Staffords, merged into the semblance of a single Battalion, they held the trenches till darkness fell, when the line was reformed just east of Gheluvelt. **Near Gheluvelt.**

In the confused and awful fighting of these days it is difficult to dissect the incidents which everywhere occurred of unheard-of gallantry and devotion to duty. The failure of the British Divisions on these fateful days would have spelt disaster to the Allied cause, and realising this, they actually achieved the impossible. To quote a writer on Ypres:—"There is something particularly stirring in the thought of this small Force beaten back step by step, as fresh and fresh troops were hurled upon it day by day, and yet never turning its back to the foe, never beaten, never despondent, and never for a moment failing in the trust which had been imposed upon it."

On the 30th October Colonel R. M. Ovens and Sergt.-Major R. Baker led a part of the remnant of the 1st South Staffords

Digitized by Google

out of the wood into a beet field, and endeavoured by short rushes, to advance to the road just north of Klein Zillebeke, and, assisted by the Gordon Highlanders on the right, tried hard to drive back the Germans, who were swarming over the ridge between Klein Zillebeke and Zandvoorde. Unfortunately the Germans were able to pick off our men as they rose to rush, and even when lying on the ground amongst the beet plants, the packs on the men's backs gave away their position and they were decimated, nor could the Gordons get on; they also suffered terrible losses. In addition, the shell fire was most accurate, a party of the Gordons behind a heap of farmyard refuse were blown to pieces. Major A. C. Buckle, with another party of the South Staffords, almost beside where Brig.-General S. Lawford was standing, was wounded by a shell, and Lieut. G. Archer-Shee, who was twice wounded, was reported missing, later officially reported killed on October 31st.

Klein Zillebeke.

Some dismounted Scots Greys, with a wounded Officer in command of them, made a most gallant effort to close with the Germans on the left of the South Staffords, but were nearly all shot down. The Officer, on horseback, brave and gallant man that he was, went down almost at once.

The shattered remnants of the 22nd Infantry Brigade now dug in just north of the village of Klein Zillebeke. "Jack Johnson" and other shell holes were utilised for cover. The Germans were only a few yards away in the opposite wood, and a reconnoitring party sent out by the G.O.C. 22nd Brigade, consisting of his Orderly Officer and half a dozen men, were wounded and captured on the morning of the 31st October.

Colonel R. M. Ovens, who was standing with a Sergeant, giving some orders, near the shelter trench, was wounded by shell fire, and Major J. F. Loder-Symonds promptly and efficiently applied first aid under very difficult conditions. The fighting became intense, and both Major J. F. Loder-Symonds and Lieut. C. F. Crousaz were killed the same day. "The chief impression left on my mind," wrote Colonel R. M. Ovens afterwards, "of this fighting, was the extraordinary phlegmatic, cheery, undismayed miens of the mud-covered Staffordshire soldiers, armed only with rifles so knocked about by incessant fighting, that many could not be fired, and even bayonets were broken and bent.

"I heard one big private, who was wiping blood off his bayonet with a bit of grass, after a charge, say: 'I got into some of them all right!' and when a less fortunate comrade said respectfully, 'What did it feel like, Bill, pushing it through them?' Bill replied stolidly, 'Oh, it was all right!'

Digitized by Google

"It shows the stuff the British soldier is made of. 'The thin red line' in the Peninsula, the same thin line at Ypres, but khaki coloured."

Next day, 31st October, came the crisis, when the fighting developed in great force against Gheluvelt village. North of it two Brigades of the 1st Division were swept back, and the 1st Coldstream wiped out as a fighting unit. The falling back of this part of the line menaced the flank of the 7th Division, which, having been reinforced, advanced again, and clung to its trenches until evening.

On the right of the British position, General Moussy, with his troops of the 9th French Corps, was struggling hard to keep the line intact towards Klein Zillebeke. He had come to the British assistance in the nick of time, but could make no advance to relieve the sorely-pressed Brigades on his left.

For five days the battle slackened into an Artillery duel, and our war-worn and weary men had a brief breathing space. On November 5th the line was readjusted, and some relief was given to the 7th Division, which was now reduced from 12,000 men and 400 Officers, to a little over 3,000. The 1st South Staffords had lost quite 80 per cent. of their effectives in this fighting. They had been relieved for a few days, but were back in the line again on November 7th, when they and their comrades of the 22nd Brigade, made a brilliant assault at Zwartelen, taking and holding a German trench. In this attack, Captain J. F. Vallentin, who had been slightly wounded and was in hospital at Ypres, on November 6th, hearing that his Regiment was going into action that night, obtained permission to rejoin. He was again wounded while leading his men, but in spite of his two wounds, pressed on until he was killed by five or six machine gun shots. The capture of the trenches which followed was in a great measure due to the confidence which the men had in his able and courageous leadership. For this exploit Captain J. F. Vallentin was awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross "for conspicuous bravery on November 7th at Zillebeke."(1)

Captain J. F. Vallentin Gains Victoria Cross at Zillebeke.

This was the first V.C. won by the South Staffordshire Regiment in the war, and the first one ever awarded to the 1st Battalion, the old 38th.

Other Officers wounded were Lieut.-Colonel R. M. Ovens and Major A. C. Buckle, and Lieuts. C. B. Adams and W. A. P. Foster reported missing. After this fight the remnant of the 1st South Staffords were relieved, and went to

(1) Official Gazette.

Digitized by Google

a rest camp for refitting. Of the 1,100 Officers and men comprising the Battalion when it landed in Belgium on October 7th, only 78 remained. During this terrific fighting in front of Ypres when they helped to "bar and bolt the door" to the coast against the German hordes, practically every Officer had either been killed or wounded, and only one N.C.O. (C.S.M. F. Bytheway) was left to bring the men out of action. Owing to such a heavy casualty list among the Officers, few reports or recommendations could be given, and probably, for this reason, the decorations awarded to the 1st Battalion for this month of terrific fighting, are so few in number. Unfortunately, all the records of the Battalion's work since they landed in Belgium, had been captured by the Germans during the night of October 20th-21st, when they were retiring on Ypres.

Afterwards, Brig.-General S. T. B. Lawford (the 22nd Brigade Commander), wrote to Lieut.-Colonel R. M. Ovens, saying:—"Please convey to all ranks my appreciation of their soldierly spirit and bearing during the very arduous tasks with which we were incessantly confronted. The Battalion has done all in its power to uphold the traditions of the Regiment, and has added to honours already gained. The heavy losses, both in Officers and men, bear witness to the calls made on the Battalion to maintain the reputation of the Army and honour of the Empire."

First Battle of Ypres, 1914.

While Major-General T. Capper, C.B., D.S.O. (Commanding the 7th Division), wrote in reference to the 22nd Brigade and the 1st South Staffords:—"This Brigade had very hard fighting, and suffered especially severe losses. It speaks highly for the soldierly spirit of this Brigade that at the close of three weeks' fighting, and very weak in Officers and men, it was able to make a gallant and successful counter-attack against the enemy at a critical moment, retaking the enemy's trenches and capturing machine guns. The Brigade at the close of the fighting before Ypres had only the Brigadier-General, four Combatant Regimental Officers, and a little over 700 other ranks left. It thus fought itself to a standstill.

"On November 7th the 1st Battalion South Staffordshire Regiment, although very weak after three weeks' fighting, made a gallant counter-attack in support of the First Corps, which was hard pressed, driving the enemy from his trenches and assisting in the capture of three machine guns. This effort at the end of three weeks' continual fighting, and with hardly any Officers left, speaks eloquently for the bearing of this Battalion."

From the 10th November, 1914, the 1st Battalion South Staffs. Regiment was at Merris, refitting after the heavy

Digitized by Google

fighting at Ypres, and for the next thirty-two days they acted as Corps troops to the Headquarters of the 4th Army Corps. Billets were scanty, and some part of the Regiment had to billet on a barge on the Canal. One dark night, a private fell off the barge into the Canal, and although a comrade made a gallant but unavailing attempt to rescue him, he was drowned. **Resting and Refitting.**

On the 1st December they formed a Guard of Honour for H.M. the King, H.R.H. Prince of Wales, M. Poincare (President of the French Republic), and General Joffre. The Guard consisted of 100 picked men, under Captain F. S. N. Savage-Armstrong, and Lieut. C. W. Evans. His Majesty the King inspected them and expressed his pleasure at their smart appearance and soldierly bearing. General Joffre, who inspected them later, paid them a high compliment.

Five days later they rejoined the 7th Division, and were temporarily attached to the 22nd Brigade at Fleurbaix. On arriving at the trenches, the left half Battalion relieved the 2nd Bedfords (21st Brigade), the right half of the Battalion remaining in Reserve.

On the 18th December the 22nd Infantry Brigade were ordered to attack and capture the German trenches in front of Well Farm. The 2nd Warwicks were to lead the attack on a front of 500 yards, supported by the 2nd Queen's Regiment. The 1st Battalion South Staffords were to extend their line to touch the right of the Warwicks, and check any counter-attack that might be made by the enemy on their flank. The 2nd Bedfordshires and the Royal Welsh Fusiliers occupying the Reserve Trenches, while the 8th Royal Scots (21st Brigade) remained as they were.

After a heavy artillery preparation by our guns, at 4.30 p.m. the Warwicks commenced their attack, the South Staffords covering the attack by heavy rifle and machine-gun fire, both during the preliminary bombardment and after it had finished. This was continued through the night until 2 a.m., when the Warwicks, finding it impossible to capture the enemy trenches, withdrew into their own section of the trenches again, and the South Staffords were ordered to withdraw into local Reserve at the farm they had previously occupied. During their withdrawal Lieut. H. R. S. Bower (South Staffords) was killed while assisting to bring in wounded men of the Warwicks. This was the end of the first Battle of Ypres. **Attack on Well Farm.**

Next day the Battalion relieved the 2nd Queen's Regiment, and took over their section of the trenches, which were in better condition and much drier than those previously

Digitized by Google

occupied. During this four days' tour they had three men wounded, and were then relieved by the 2nd Queens.

Christmas Day, 1914, was spent by the Regiment in billets at Cron Ballot-Fleurbaix. Greetings were received from H.M. the King and Queen, Queen Alexandra, and Lord Kitchener. The last four days of December, 1914, were spent in the trenches, when the Battalion took over the whole of No. 5 Sub-Section. There was a lot of sniping by the enemy, and their casualties were 3 killed and 4 wounded. The weather was very bad, raining heavily most of the time, and to add to their discomfort, on December 30th, their line was broken by the flooding of the trenches near Well Farm. The water was in some cases 4 feet deep, and in spite of all efforts to drain it off, it remained so during the rest of their time in these trenches. Towards 11 p.m. the Germans started a lively fusillade, but no attack matured.

Trench Warfare.

Both Armies having dug in from the North Sea to the Switzerland frontier, they now settled down to the dreary routine of trench warfare. These trenches, in places varying from 30 to 200 yards apart, formed the first lines of the opposing Armies. Behind the British front were second and third lines, with further reserve positions at intervals in the rear. The Germans had even stronger positions in rear of their first line. The ramifications of their trenches were endless, and were afterwards strengthened by great redoubts manned by machine guns, almost flush with the ground, while in the "No Man's Land" between the first lines, were terrific barbed wire entanglements of enormous strength.

Digitized by Google

RECORD OF THE 1ST BATTALION, 1915.

Trench Warfare—Battle of Neuve Chapelle—Battle of Festubert—Fighting Round Hooge—Battle of Loos—Attack on the Hohenzollern Redoubt—Capture of The Quarries—Inspected by H.M. King George V. —At the La Bassée Road.

NEW YEAR'S DAY, 1915, saw the introduction of a new system of trench duty: four days in trenches, four days in No. 2 Local Reserve, the latter period ensuring a complete rest; and four days in No. 1 Local Reserve, in which, when required—more often than not—they furnished working and fatigue parties. On being relieved by the 2nd Warwicks, the 1st Battalion went into No. 2 Local Reserve, and after four days' complete rest were moved up into No. 1 Local Reserve, where they were constantly employed in making new fire trenches, as the old ones had become untenable. On January 7th, Lieut.-General Sir Charles Tucker, K.C.B., etc., wired the Battalion:—"In the Peninsula your predecessors did wonders, and you are now upholding the traditions of the Regiment grandly. New Year greetings from your Colonel-in-Chief."

For the whole of the month of January, 1915, the Battalion spent its time alternately in the trenches and in Local Reserve; and when not resting, was busy repairing trenches, which, owing to the awful weather, had become quite untenable— waterlogged, mud and slush everywhere; the discomfort was appalling. New ones had to be made, which meant a great amount of hard night work. But the men, even if they "groused" about it, did the work well and cheerfully. Fortunately, in the Rest Billets, it had been possible by the end of the month of January to provide a Battalion bath-house, and the men were able to enjoy the luxury of a hot bath, get their hair cut, and were given a newly-washed set of underclothing, the soiled linen being washed while they were in the trenches. A recreation and reading room was also provided, and this was a great boon to the men when in the Rest Billets, although at all times they had to attend fully armed.

Trench Warfare.

While in Local Reserve the men were trained in the new "practise alarm," and the 1st Battalion again proved their smartness in getting on the move in record time.

Digitized by Google

The month of February, 1915, was passed in the same dreary fashion—regular tours in the trenches and in Local Reserve. Expected attacks by the enemy failed to materialise, and although there was much sniping, with occasional gunfire, the casualties for the month were light.

On the 1st March, 1915, they were relieved in the trenches by the 1st Canadian Regiment, and went into billets at Rue Delpierre. On the 7th March, they relieved the 1st Royal Welsh Fusiliers in the trenches. Heavy rain most of the time, with intermittent shelling each day. Major Buckle went into hospital, and Captain A. B. Beauman took over the command of the Battalion temporarily. Four days later saw them in Brigade Reserve, in preparation for active operations, which began on March 10th with the battle of Neuve Chapelle.

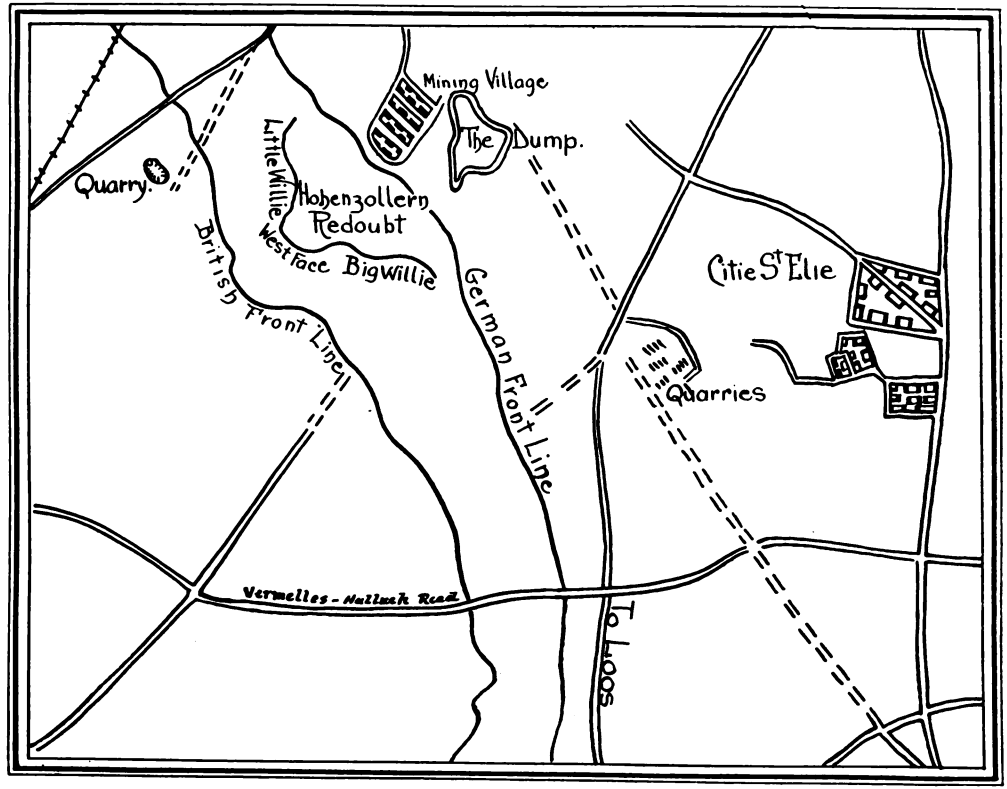
Battle of Neuve Chapelle.

The intention of the British High Command was not only to straighten our own line, but to obtain an entrant into the German front which, it was hoped, would ensure the capture of Lille a few days later. On the morning of the 10th March the clouds hung low in the sky, and there was slight mist in the distance. The artillery preparation lasted for a full half-hour and pulverised the German trenches. Then our gunners lengthened their range and the attack began. The 1st South Staffords were in Brigade Reserve, and when called upon for action they were delayed by the guide (a private soldier) who lost his way; and it was nearly 5 p.m. before the Battalion reached its destination on the left of the 24th Brigade. Here they went into trenches as Brigade Reserve. They had been heavily shelled during the day with both shrapnel and high explosive shells, but fortunately their casualties were light. Next day was devoted to strengthening the lines on the ground won. The Germans developed a counter-attack in force along the front, but their efforts were fruitless.

On March 12th, the mist continued, and the artillery could give little help to the attackers. All this day the 1st South Staffords fought hard against the Pietre fort, a strongly fortified position in the German line, bristling with machine guns and heavy wire; while the rest of the 7th Division were attacking the Des Layes bridges and the German second trenches.

Owing to the heavy mist, the artillery could not support the attacking Battalions, who took position after position, but could not hold them without the aid of artillery; and by nightfall it was evident a position of stalemate had been reached. For two days the fighting continued, and on March 14th the 1st Battalion started at 2 a.m. to relieve the 2nd Gordons in the first line trenches. Owing to wrong direction

Digitized by Google



BATTLE OF LOOS.
Attack on the Hohenzollern Redoubt.

MAP 1.

To face p. 160.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

(the guide sent completely lost his way), the Battalion was somewhat late in effecting this relief. This delay gave the Germans time to recover from the surprise of the first attack, and it was soon seen that without further intense artillery preparation the attack could not proceed. The weather conditions made aerial observation impossible, while the telephonic communications having been smashed up, communication between the guns and front line was difficult. The capture of Neuve Chapelle gave the British better observation points overlooking the German lines, and its acquisition was important, for it taught us much.

After the dreary routine of the trenches for months, the sense of going forward elated the men to such a degree that even desperately wounded men "retired with jokes on their lips." Neuve Chapelle was a success, and even if we paid for it, the Germans paid more.

After relieving the 2nd Gordons, the Battalion returned to Headquarters, 20th Brigade, and went into Reserve; but at 5 p.m. the same day they were ordered to rejoin the 22nd Brigade, and marched to billets. They were back in the trenches again next day, relieving the 8th Royal Scots, and themselves being relieved by the 2nd Gordons, they went into billets near Laventie station, where they remained until 6th April, practising new attack and furnishing working parties for the Royal Engineers.

Trench Warfare.

They were operating in this area for several days, and there was much activity on the 9th, when, after relieving the 6th Gordons, they bombarded the enemy's trenches with trench mortars, blowing down the parapet for about ten yards, and preventing the enemy from repairing by constant rifle and machine gun fire. Next day, the Germans, retaliated by bombarding our trenches, but without much effect, our casualties being one killed and one wounded. There was heavy shelling again at noon on the 11th April, and aeroplanes were active about 5 p.m., but no casualties. The 1st Battalion was relieved on the 14th by the 21st Brigade, and proceeded to billets in La Gorgue, remaining there until April 21st, when the 22nd Brigade was inspected by Field-Marshal Sir John French, Commander-in-Chief, at 3 p.m. After the inspection, Sir John French spoke as follows:—

Inspection by Sir John French.

"1st Battalion, South Staffordshire Regiment.

"I am very pleased to be here this afternoon as your Commander-in-Chief to thank you for the splendid work you have done since you came into the country.

"Your last good work was at Neuve Chapelle, where we gained a glorious victory. Your Brigadier-General tells me

Digitized by Google

that you were in the trenches and did fine work. I also remember your good work in times past, especially at Ypres. I regret that your Commanding Officer, Lieut.-Colonel Ovens, who led you so gallantly, was wounded, but I hope he will soon join you again.

"You have splendid traditions and have seen hard fighting. You bear many honours on your Standard, and you have the satisfaction of feeling that you have upheld so splendid a tradition and added to it.

"I am very glad to see so splendid a front on parade after such hard work, and I feel sure that whatever you are called upon to do in future, you will do it as splendidly as you have done in the past, whether the war be long or short.

"Every Officer, N.C.O. and man, please accept warmest thanks from your Commander-in-Chief. I am very glad to have had the pleasure of coming to see you."

Trench Warfare.

On 28th April, the 1st Battalion moved to the Meteren-Pradelles area, and went into billets, remaining there until May 5th, when they left and marched to La Gorgue, and on May 8th they moved up to the assembly trenches at Rue Dubois. During the attack by the 8th Division on the Fromelles-Aubers ridge, the 22nd Infantry Brigade was in support, remaining so until 2 a.m. on May 10th, when they moved to near Rouse de Bout, the same evening marching to Essars, near Bethune, where they bivouaced. Here they remained until May 15th, when they moved into the trenches near Rue de Cailloux, preparatory to the attack on the German trenches at Festubert. Colonel R. M. Ovens, C.M.G., who had been wounded at the battle of Gheluvelt, was in hospital in England, and Major H. E. Walshe held command of the Battalion. Captain H. de Trafford, 2nd Lieutenants A. W. Lee, W. Cooper, C. H. Kinnaird, and L. E. Henderson, with 131 N.C.O.'s and men, were left with transports to replace casualties.

On Sunday, 16th May, at daybreak, the 7th Division, on the right of the 2nd Division, advanced to the attack. The 1st South Staffords were in position in a second line trench; in front, in the British line 200 yards away, were the 2nd Queen's; on the left, the 1st Royal Welsh Fusiliers; with the 2nd Warwicks and 8th Royal Scots in support.

At 2.45 a.m., an intense artillery bombardment of the enemy trenches (150 yards in front of our first line) started, and lasted till 3.15 a.m. At this time the Queen's advanced to the attack, and the 1st South Staffords occupied their trenches. At 3.30 a.m., the leading Company of the 1st Battalion ("B" Company, Captain A. B. Beauman) attacked

Digitized by Google

the German line on the right of the Queen's Regiment, followed by "A" Company (Captain Shore), "D" Company (Captain Lord), and "C" Company (Captain Smith). The German trench was rushed, and "B" Company, with bomb throwers led by 2nd Lieutenant L. L. Hassell, cleared the trench away to the right beyond point M.3. "A" and "D" Companies pushed forward, and then swinging to the right, finally occupied the objective of the Battalion, *i.e.* from point M.3 to M.5, which was consolidated, the advance being more than a mile. The German trenches at this point were very complicated, and the 1st South Staffords reached the enemy main communication trench near the Rue d'Ouvert. Captain G. S. Bonner played a great part in this offensive. "He went up and led the men through hell, and kept them cheery." His energy and presence inspired all ranks to stand what followed. Practically the whole operation's success was due to the work of the 38th, who held all the ground they had won. Part of the time there was a serious gap between the inner flanks of the 2nd and 7th Divisions, which was not united until the evening of May 16th, mainly by the efforts of the 1st South Staffords.

They retained the position won, in spite of intense and heavy artillery fire, until they were relieved at midnight on May 18/19th by the Wiltshires and one Company of the Yorkshire Regiment. The country was dead flat and seamed with watercourses, and it was not easy to find the points indicated by our air reconnaissance; and, as the Germans attempted to make a barrage of fire behind us, it was a perilous business to get up reserves of men and ammunition. The supports in the rear had to sit still during hours of shelling—the most difficult of duties in war. Rain fell on the following day, and this and the marshy nature of the ground to some extent nullified the effect of the German shells, which frequently sank into the soft earth without exploding. For five days the 1st South Staffords and their comrades of the 22nd Brigade had stuck to their posts under a perfect tornado of shell fire. It was almost impossible to bring up food and water to the troops, except at night, for the enemy had got the range to a nicety, and drenched all the back areas with a heavy bombardment. On being relieved by the Canadian Division on the 19th, the 7th Division marched to Bethune and went into billets.(1)

(1) The casualties of the 1st Battalion were :—2 officers killed, 43 other ranks. Eight officers wounded and 208 other ranks. Missing, 2. One officer—2nd Lieut. W. B. Timmins—died of wounds; and 8 other ranks died of wounds.

Digitized by Google

The gain of ground in this first stage of the Festubert fighting was considerable, but if we paid a heavy price for it, the enemy's losses were much heavier.

Resting and Refitting.

The Battalion now had a well-earned rest for a few days at Lillers, and on May 20th Brig.-General S. T. Lawford, Commanding 22nd Infantry Brigade, paid them a visit at Lillers, and in a speech to the Battalion said:—"South Staffords, when I asked you last week to do your best during operations, I knew what answer I should get. I have had the answer. You have done splendidly; no regiment could have done better. You went through the German trenches and took them, and, what is more, made the Germans run; and I am sure that whenever you see them you will make them run again. Your bomb throwers were of the greatest assistance to you. You have every reason to be proud of yourselves. The way you remained under shell fire for three days without moving was splendid. This is much harder than chasing Germans. I congratulate you all for what you did for the 7th Division, and more particularly the 22nd Brigade."

Next day they received a visit from Major-General H. de la P. Gough, C.B., Commanding 7th Division. He congratulated the men on parade, and amongst other things he said:—"Your steadiness under that heavy bombardment was an example to the Army."

The same day the 1st Battalion marched to Allouagne, and paid a visit to the 2nd South Staffords, who were in billets there.

Trench Warfare, Hooge.

They remained at Lillers until May 27th, and during this period the 7th Division was inspected by General Joffre, Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Forces. After his inspection, the 1st Battalion marched to Lespesses to billets, remaining there until 2nd June. During the early days of June, 1915, there was much fighting near Hooge, when they relieved the 2nd Gordons in the trenches. Captain A. B. Beauman and seven other ranks were wounded. For the remainder of the month of June they were on trench duty or in reserve in this area, but their casualties were slight.

On the 1st July they were again in the trenches near Le Plantin, where their front line was heavily shelled from 2 a.m. to 3.30 a.m. Casualties: 2 killed, 2 wounded. They were in Divisional Reserve from 12th to 18th July, when they relieved the Royal Welsh Fusiliers in the trenches for four days. During this tour they had 3 killed and 19 wounded. After this tour, they marched to billets at Paradis, where, on the 26th July, they were again inspected by Brig.-General Lawford, preparatory to relieving the Grenadier Guards in

Digitized by Google

defended localities. During the next four days they had 9 wounded.

On the 30th July, Lieut.-Colonel R. M. Ovens, C.M.G., rejoined and took over the command of the Battalion again.

During this period of their fighting round Hooge, they had their first experience of the latest instance of German devilry, for it was during the fighting on the Menin Road the Germans introduced liquid fire into the trenches. Unable to overcome the tenacity and valour of our men, the Germans resorted to the most devilish forms of warfare, and, for the moment, they were partially successful; but this was due far more to the surprise and temporary confusion caused by the liquid fire than to the actual damage inflicted.

Fighting Round Hooge.

During August, the 1st South Staffords were still operating in the Menin Road area, and on August 22nd had a few casualties, including Lieut. G. H. Osborne wounded.

On the 27th August, Brig.-General S. Lawford, C.B., vacated the command of the 22nd Brigade on his appointment to take over the command of the 41st Division. He was succeeded in the command of the 22nd Brigade by Brig.-General R. Steele (late Coldstream Guards), and in his farewell address to the Brigade General Lawford said:—"In taking farewell of the 22nd Infantry Brigade, with sincere regret, the Brig.-General Commanding wishes to express his heartfelt thanks to all ranks for the sterling support they have always given him. He wishes to place on record his high appreciation of the splendid work performed by the Brigade since its formation, the ever-ready response and devotion to duty under very severe conditions.

"The Brigade may be proud of its achievements. The Brig.-General Commanding will follow its future with the greatest interest, and well knows it will add to the splendid record already gained. He wishes all ranks the best of luck."

On the 28th August, the 1st Battalion were moved to a new area near Vermelles, where they took over a new section of trenches, relieving the 6th Royal Scots Fusiliers, and became temporarily attached to the First Division. For the next few days all available troops were employed in digging and constructing a new front line. They were subjected to desultory shelling by the enemy, and sustained a few casualties. They were afterwards operating in the Verquigneul sector for the month of September, 1915, and preparing for the attack on Loos, which began on September 25th.

Trench Warfare.

In September, 1915, the Allied Commanders arranged for a combined attack on certain points of the German lines,

Digitized by Google

which culminated in the Battle of Loos. The French attacked in Champagne, in the south, with considerable success; and to help them in their fight against the Germans, as well as distracting the enemy's attention and diverting him to other points of attack, Sir John French made two attacks on the German line in the north, the main attack being delivered by the 1st and 4th Army Corps between the La Bassée Canal on the north and a point of the enemy's line opposite the village of Grenay on the south. At the same time, a secondary attack was made by the 5th Corps on Bellewaarde Farm, east of Ypres. This was more a containing than a real attack, designed to distract the enemy's attention from the scene of the main attack, in which it was eminently successful. The chief objectives of the 1st and 4th Corps was the capture of the Hohenzollern Redoubt, Fosse 8, The Quarries, and Cite St. Elie. The objective of the 22nd Infantry Brigade was, first, the enemy's first and second line trenches; second, The Quarries; third, Cite St. Elie; while the final objective was Wingles, and thence to Meurchin, where the canal crossings were to be seized.

The Battle of Loos, Sept. 25th, 1915.

The position to be attacked was an exceptionally strong one. Opposite the front of the main line of attack, the distance between our own and the enemy trenches varied from about 100 to 500 yards. On the left of the 7th Division was the famous Hohenzollern Redoubt, a strong work thrust out nearly 500 yards in front of the German lines and close to our own, connected with their front line by three communication trenches and linking up with Fosse 8, which was a coal mine with a high and strongly defended slag-heap.

Immediately in front of the position held by the 1st South Staffords, and behind the German first line, was the position known as "The Quarries," in the German second line; further behind this was the strongly defended mining village of Cite St. Elie—close to Hulluch—on the main road from La Bassée to Lens, which formed the German third line. All these points were strongly fortified, and there were besides a number of slag-heaps, pits and natural features which lent themselves to defence.

On the 23rd September, the 1st Battalion moved up to the reserve trenches at Noyelles. During the night of 24th—25th September it rained in torrents, and the trenches in which the Battalion spent the 24th September were half-full of water. At 10 p.m., the Battalion left its trenches at Noyelles and moved forward through ruined Vermelles, which was thickly occupied by Field Artillery, on through the maze of trenches up to its position.

"The mud was knee-deep, and everyone was pretty wet and muddy by the time our position in the line was reached." The

Digitized by Google

Battalion was in position by about 12 midnight and distributed as follows:—"C" Company, under Lieut. Wm. Cooper, in front line trench. "A" Company, under Captain Henry J. de Trafford, in support trench about 80 yards behind "C" Company. "D" Company in second support trench about 80 yards behind "A," under Captain Claude Limbery; while "B" Company, under Lieut. Henry Burke, were in the old British trench about 50 yards behind "D" Company.

The Battalion Staff consisted of Lieut.-Colonel R. M. Ovens, C.M.G., Captain H. W. MacGeorge, Acting Adjutant, Lieut. G. B. Schon, M.G.O., Captain H. W. Parnis, R.A.M.C., M.O. Regt. Sergt.-Major Joseph Snape."

The line occupied by the Battalion was about 300 yards long, and facing nearly due east. The German line the 1st South Staffords were told off to attack was about 450 yards long, strongly fortified and powerfully strengthened with flank defence, with wire in front of exceptional thickness and strong posts.

There were small redoubts, manned with numerous machine guns, at intervals, and the left flank was enfiladed by a variety of fire from Hohenzollern Redoubt and Fosse 8.

1st Battalion's Advance, Sept. 25th.

The distance to be traversed by the Battalion in the attack before reaching the enemy's lines was approximately 500 yards. The 1st South Staffords led the right attack, the 2nd Royal Warwicks the left attack, with the 1st Royal Welsh Fusiliers in support, and the 2nd Queen's in Reserve.

After an intense barrage by our artillery, and the launching of a cloud of gas against the enemy trenches. "At 6.28 a.m., on September 25th, the order 'Get ready to charge' came down the line, and Lieut. W. Cooper, whose eyes had been on his watch, gave the order, 'Scouts and wire-cutters advance.' Directly after, the order to the Companies to advance was given, and 'C' Company climbed up the ladders and advanced through the smoke screen, which was very dense (caused by our use of 'smoke bombs,' smoke candles and gas). The advance was made in a thick cold mist and drizzling rain.

"Lieut. W. Cooper led his men on with the utmost gallantry, and was killed on the German wire. He was a most gallant Officer, loved and respected by all ranks. 'A' Company came on splendidly, ably led by Captain Henry de Trafford, who behaved with the greatest coolness and daring. He fell on the German wire, and his last words were, 'Don't mind me; push ahead.' Truly he and Lieut. Cooper, and the other brave Officers, N.C.Os. and men, who fell on this fateful day, deserve the undying gratitude of their country

Digitized by Google

and their Regiment. Lieut. Bell, with 'A' Company, did excellent work, and proved himself—as at Festubert—a leader of men. 'D' Company, led by Captain C. Limbery, did gallant work under their young commander, who, with many others, was wounded. 'B' Company, under Lieut. H. J. Burke, was the Reserve Company in fourth line, and were very well led by this young Officer, who displayed much bravery and keenness. He was, unfortunately, killed during the advance."(1)

Capture of the Quarries.

Advancing in extended order, the old 38th, at about three paces interval between each man, moving steadily forward, they stormed the first German line, took the second or support line, and the remnant of this magnificent old Regiment, mixed up with other Corps, moved on and captured "The Quarries," some of them, under Colonel Ovens, actually penetrated the German lines to within 50 yards of the German position at Cite St. Elie.

About 200 Germans surrendered to Lieut.-Colonel R. M. Ovens and a mixed party of about 25 South Staffords and men of the Border Regiment, who had fired on them until they charged up to the wire in front of the trenches. Here, at 9.30 p.m. the same day, this remnant of the 1st South Staffords, and a detachment of the Yorkshire Regiment (part of the 27th Infantry Brigade), were sent to guard the south side of "The Quarries," under Lieut.-Colonel R. M. Ovens, who had with him, Lieut. G. B. Schon, M.G. Officer, and 2nd Lieut. Brocklesby. The Germans made a strong counter-attack, and the 27th Infantry Brigade was driven back by a mass of Germans, after holding on for hours against great odds.

The 1st South Staffords, too, were forced to fall back to fresh positions west of "The Quarries." The enemy made fresh bombing attacks, and deluged them with a very heavy artillery bombardment, causing many casualties. Lieut.-Colonel R. M. Ovens and the detachment with him was reinforced by a detachment of the Battalion under Major H. E. Walshe, with whom was the Adjutant, Major Singleton Bonner, D.S.O., 2nd Lieuts. Parkes and K. Dunlop and Lieut. and Quartermaster S. Bradbury. These Officers had been left in Reserve with the Regimental transport (except Major S. Bonner, who was ill, and who very pluckily came up and helped until the evening of the 26th, when he was seized with gas poisoning symptoms and was sent back to hospital). About 11 p.m. the same evening a determined German attack drove back the Brigade holding the north side of "The

(1) Battalion War Diary.

Digitized by Google

Quarries," and here Brig.-General Bruce was wounded and captured, and Colonel Heath, commanding the 2nd Queen's Regiment, was killed with other Officers and men.

Lieut.-Colonel Ovens and Lieut.-Colonel Young (Yorkshire Regiment), with an N.C.O. and four men, reconnoitred "The Quarries" on the north side, and found the position held by the Germans. They were nearly shot, but by a timely use of his revolver, Colonel Ovens enabled this party to get away.

During the advance on the Sunday, 26th September, Major-General Sir Thompson Capper, commanding the 7th Division, was wounded, and died on the following morning. "He had led his Division at the first Battle of Ypres, and at Festubert, and although designed for a Corps Command, pleaded to be allowed to take his Division into action again at Loos. In his complete fearlessness and devotion he recalled some Crusader of the great ages rather than a modern man at arms." (Buchan.)

Death of General Capper.

From the 27th to 30th September the small remnants of the 22nd Infantry Brigade were disposed as follows:—

2nd Queen's Regiment,
2nd Royal Warwicks,
1st South Staffords

in the trenches (old German trench) below the Hohenzollern Redoubt and Fosse 8, with the 2nd Royal Welsh Fusiliers in the old British trench east of Vermelles.

"On these four days the 1st South Staffords did magnificent work, under every description of fire. Fierce counter-attacks by the German bombers were repeatedly checked by our own bombers, who continually went to the assistance of the hardly-pressed Regiments on their right and left flanks. The bravery and determination shown by the 1st South Staffords' bombers, and by the machine gun section, under Lieut. G. B. Schon, forms a glorious series of achievements during these trying six days of hard fighting."

As Lieut.-Colonel R. M. Ovens states:—"Time after time the call 'Staffordshire bombers this way!' was heard, and never was that call for help left unanswered. The Germans made attack after attack down from 'The Quarries' towards their old front line, and were as often driven back by the magnificent steadiness and splendid counter-bombing of the old 38th (1st South Staffords). The endurance and steadfast British pluck of these brave men undoubtedly repeatedly saved the situation."

Heavy rain fell part of the time, the trenches were a sea of mud, and the bullets and shells fell thick day and night,

Digitized by Google

but "confident of final victory the representatives of the immortal old 38th Regiment, the 'Fighting Staffords' held their ground and beat back all attacks."

"At about 1 a.m. on the 29th September, Colonel Ovens and Lieut. Parkes, with a burial party, carried out the sad duty of burying that gallant and much beloved Officer, Captain H. de Trafford, and many N.C.Os. and men."(1)

At 3 a.m. on the 30th September, the Battalion was relieved by the East Yorkshire Regiment, and all that was left of them marched to Sailly-la-Bourse, where they went into billets for two nights, but although the battle had died down, it was not yet over. We had driven a salient into the German lines and captured some of their strongest defences. The men were in high feather over it, even the wounded, as they were passed down to the Casualty Clearing Station, were cheerful and joyous, knowing they had shown the Germans they were their superiors in fighting.

The Battalion had gone into the Battle of Loos with a strength of 21 Officers and 729 N.C.Os. and men; they came out with a total of 9 Officers killed, 8 wounded, 1 who died from wounds, while 430 N.C.Os. and men were killed and wounded.(2)

"Of the gallantry and undying devotion to duty displayed by the Officers, N.C.Os. and men in those awful six days, it is impossible to write fully. They added a glorious and memorable page to the history of their grand old Regiment.

"Lieut. G. B. Schon, in command of the machine gun detachment, displayed such tenacity, bravery and skill during these six days that he was subsequently honoured by an 'Immediate' award of the Military Cross. The detachment did magnificent work under his direction.

"Lieut. Parkes did excellent work during five of these trying days, while 2nd Lieut. Brocklesby did very good work, exhibiting great pluck and self-possession."(3)

---

(1) War Diary.

(2) The following officers were killed :—
Captain Henry J. de Trafford; Lieut. Henry J. Burke, Lieut. R. J. Richardson, 2nd Lieuts. Kenneth Dunlop (on 26th Sept., 1915), Wm. Cooper, H. W. Bone, W. N. O. Lee, H. C. Reynard; Captain H. W. MacGeorge, A/Adjutant; 2nd Lieut. C. G. Weityman (died of wounds).
The wounded officers were :—
Captain Claude Limbery; Lieut. G. H. Osborne, Lieut. E. Bell; 2nd Lieuts. L. E. Henderson, B. J. Kirchner, H. A. Cundall.
Suffering from gas poisoning :—
Major Singleton Bonner, D.S.O.; 2nd Lieut. D. S. Glover.

(3) War Diary.

Digitized by Google

At 6 p.m. on October 1st they were back in the trenches again opposite "Pope's Nose," near Cambrai and the Hohenzollern Redoubt, and were heavily shelled. They had four casualties. Firing by the enemy was continuous, but in less volume. A red light was seen to go up from the Hohenzollern Redoubt, and at 8 p.m. on October 3rd, a wire from the 7th Division told them that the Germans were again in possession of it.

Trench Warfare.

Firing was very heavy during the night of the 3rd October, but they had no casualties. Next day they went into billets at Preol, and as the 2nd Battalion South Staffords were located at Bethune, only three miles away, an exchange of visits was made between the two Battalions. The 7th October saw them back in the trenches on the La Bassée Canal, at Pont Fixe, and next day, at 2 p.m., the Germans began a heavy counter-attack against our lines from Loos to the Hohenzollern Redoubt. The attack was delivered by some twenty-eight German Battalions in first line, with larger Forces in support, after being prepared by an exceptionally heavy bombardment. But on all parts of the line but two, the Germans were repulsed with tremendous loss.

This was the first battle in which our troops retaliated on the Germans in using poison gas, and although the Germans had prepared for such reprisals, our gas attack met with marked success, producing a most demoralising effect on the enemy on this front.

For the next few days the 1st Battalion held the front line trenches from La Bassée Road to halfway to the La Bassée Canal, and on the 13th October they again took part in the attack on the Hohenzollern Redoubt.

Attack on Hohenzollern Redoubt, 13th October.

The bombardment began at 12 noon, and smoke candles and gas were extensively used. At 2 p.m. the men crossed the parapets, but in spite of our preparation, and the use of gas, the Germans had not been idle. From deep dug-outs, where they had been hidden from the artillery bombardment, they popped up again as our men advanced, and with machine guns and artillery fire sprayed the British advance. The Battalion gained its objective with small loss. 2nd Lieut. Clark-Lens, and two N.C.Os. and men were the only wounded. Next day the Battalion moved into Brigade Reserve, and on October 15th sent one and a half Companies to Cambrai Support Point, and another place in the line. While here they received a congratulatory letter from Lieut.-General Sir C. Tucker, G.C.B., G.C.V.O. (Colonel-in-Chief of the Regiment), praising the Battalion for their magnificent work near Loos from September 25th to 30th.

Digitized by Google

On relief they marched to Busnes, where they remained training until October 28th. A few days before they had learned to their great delight that they had been chosen by Brig.-General Steele, commanding 22nd Brigade, to represent the Brigade at the review of some picked regiments by H.M. the King. Only two Infantry Battalions in the 7th Division were chosen for this mark of distinction. The weather, unfortunately, was very wet and cold.(1)

Inspection by H.M. King George V.

The inspection was held near Bethune on the 28th October, and His Majesty was heartily cheered by all ranks. It was after he had left the 1st Battalion's lines that the King met with his unfortunate accident, his horse falling and seriously injuring him.

Next day, October 29th, they took over that part of the line from Windy Corner to Pont Fixe, the ground was very marshy, and it was difficult to keep the trenches in repair. Their portion of the line was near to the spot known as "The Duck's Bill," and at one place the trenches were separated from the Germans by a bare 20 yards. It rained heavily for days, and the Battalion did a lot of digging and repairing of parapets; almost as fast as they were repaired the heavy rain washed them down again. Billets, such as they were, were very dirty, and it was a welcome relief to the 1st South Staffords when the 2nd Gordon's took over the line on November 1st. On November 2nd, during the temporary absence of Brig.-General Steele, Lieut.-Colonel R. M. Ovens took over the command of the 22nd Brigade.

Trench Warfare.

The heavy rain continued, and outdoor work was impossible, the trenches were partly under water, the ground a perfect morass. While in the trenches on November 3rd and 4th two German soldiers of the 56th (Prussian) Infantry crossed over and surrendered. The Germans stood up in their trenches in full view and tried to be friendly, and finally two more of them came over and surrendered, they were from Posen, and said they hated the Prussians. From November 5th to November 12th the Battalion were in billets at Essars and Mt. Bernonchon. Here training and practise in wearing gas helmets was carried out. During their stay here the Officers of the 38th and 80th met at Gonnehem. Lieut.-Colonel Boyd Moss, commanding the 2nd Battalion (80th), was acting as Commanding Officer of the 6th Brigade, 2nd Division, in which they were serving, while Lieut.-Colonel R. M. Ovens, commanding the 1st Battalion (38th), was filling a similar command in the 22nd Brigade, 7th Division. The two

(1) See Record of 2nd Battalion, p. 312.

Digitized by Google

Battalions of the South Staffordshires being only a few miles apart.

On the 12th November Lieut.-Colonel R. M. Ovens resumed command of the 1st Battalion, and the same day they marched to the front line, from Bethune, and took over both sides of the La Bassée Road line in relief of the 19th Division. Heavy rain was falling, but after their few days' rest "the men looked fit and hard." The trenches occupied during this tour were very bad, and the awful weather made things worse, so that great discomfort was their portion. The section they were in was known as "Woburn Abbey," and for billeting, they were lodged in "Harley Street." 2nd Lieut. J. D. Hewetson was wounded while on duty, and Lieut.-Colonel R. M. Ovens having proceeded to England on leave, Captain H. Lewis acted as Commanding Officer in his absence.

They were in and out of the trenches for the rest of the month of November, with few casualties, and Lieut.-Colonel R. M. Ovens resumed command on November 26th. During the whole of the month the weather was unspeakably bad, and on December 3rd they marched (the men wearing waterproof sheets) from L'Ecleme, via Lillers, to St. Hilaire, leaving there by train on December 5th for Saleux Station, near Amiens, and on arrival, marched to Molliers-Vidame. They showed the way to the other three Battalions of the 22nd Brigade, for the time taken for the whole Battalion and transport to clear the Station was only 1¼ hours.

While in billets at Molliers-Vidame, on the 18th December, the Battalion played the 1st Queen's in a football tie for Brig.-General Watts' Cup, and won by 10 goals to one. On December 20th they went into billets at La Mesge, and left the 22nd Infantry Brigade, joining the 91st Infantry Brigade, commanded by Brig.-General F. Kempster, D.S.O., they were now brigaded with the 21st and 22nd Battalions the Manchester Regiment, they remained here until the end of January, 1916.

Sports.

On Christmas Day, 1915, Battalion sports were held, and a Marathon Race was won by C.Q.M.S. Doley 1st, Lce.-Cpl. Machin 2nd, Sergt. Gough 3rd.

On 3rd January, 1916, they played the 21st Manchesters in the round for General Watts' Cup, beating them by three goals to one.

The same day a boxing tournament was held, in which all bouts were won by 1st South Staffords; on January 18th the 7th Division cross-country run was held, this was won by the 2nd Border Regiment, the 1st South Staffords being 7th

Digitized by Google

out of 15. A further round in General Watts' Cup Competition took place on January 26th, the 1st South Staffords beating the 22nd Manchesters by two goals to one.

On the 29th January. 1916, the following Warrant Officers and N.C.Os. were granted Commissions:

R.S.M. J. Snape,
R.Q.M.S. L. Wolverson,
C.Q.M.S. F. T. Mozin.

After the Battle of Loos, in October, 1915, the Higher Command realised that great as that offensive was, still greater and more gigantic would have to be the next offensive, if we were to smash the German strongholds, and for nearly a year the Allies had settled down to the wearisome work of trench warfare, while preparing for the great attack which culminated in the Battle of the Somme.

Sir Douglas Haig had become British Commander-in-Chief, after Field-Marshal Lord French's retirement, who well deserved his rest after the strain he had undergone. During this period a new policy was introduced on our side of "blooding" old and new Divisions. As one Officer put it, it was the only way for the men to "keep their tails up!" and the competition between various Battalions as to who should get best "raid" results became very keen, for this form of sport keyed the men up to a high state of efficiency.

The value of these unexpected raids lay not only in helping to undermine the *morale* of the Germans, whose nerves were strained to the utmost, but by capturing an occasional prisoner it enabled the Higher Command to know what troops were opposed to them.

Digitized by Google

RECORD OF THE 1st BATTALION, 1916.

Trench Warfare—Bray-sur-Somme—South of Marmetz—Battle of the Somme—Capture of Dantzig Alley—Capture of a German Battalion—High Wood—Delville Wood—Capture of Ginchy—Raid on German Trenches—Beaumont Hamel.

ON January 30th, 1916, the 1st Battalion moved into the area Bray-sur-Somme, and went into Reserve billets. Here they were under shell fire for a few days with slight casualties, and while on trench duty on 6th February, the Germans blew a mine in front of their trenches, killing 4 men, wounding 4, with one missing. **Trench Warfare.**

During this tour of duty they effectively put a stop to the activity of enemy snipers. The hostile artillery was fairly active, as our own artillery was unable to retaliate owing to reliefs taking place. During the month of February it rained continuously, and this prevented improvements being made in the trenches, so that what with the bad weather, and the horrible condition of the sector they were in, combined with the enemy's artillery fire, things were most unpleasant for them. They remained in this sector of the front line until the end of May, 1916.

On the 18th March they played the 2nd Gordons in the semi-final for General Watts' Cup. Result: 1st South Staffords, 3 goals; 2nd Gordons, 2 goals. During the match the enemy were very active with trench mortars and rifle grenades, but this did not affect either players or spectators, although shells were dropping and bursting all round the playing field. **Sports.**

On 29th March the final for General Watts' Football Cup was played, the 1st South Staffords defeating the R.A.M.C. by one goal to nil, "a grand match, in which both sides displayed great form."

During the period 21st to 28th April the Germans were very active with their artillery, rapid fire being concentrated often on one spot for eight minutes. Most of the 1st Battalion's casualties during this period were caused by shell fire. They had 17 men killed, 5 wounded, and Lieut. A. Bonner was wounded on April 27th. In May, the same year, they were rather unfortunate. Temporary Lieut. and Act.-Adjutant T. D. Parkes was wounded, and on the 20th May,

Digitized by Google

while in Reserve billets at Bray, the Germans started shelling the villages in the back area, between 8.30 and 9 a.m. One shell fell in the yard of Battalion Headquarters and did a lot of damage.(1)

Great presence of mind was shown by C.S.M. A. Wolverson (who, although himself wounded), and Corporal J. A. Armstrong, in giving first-aid to R.S.M. Hopkins, a most gallant and capable Warrant Officer, who was bleeding profusely from his wounds. The last few days in May were very trying for them, they were in the trenches south of Mametz, and the enemy was very active with artillery, machine gun fire and rifle grenades, but in spite of the heavy shelling steady improvements were made in the trenches, and good work was done by patrol parties under the leadership of 2nd Lieuts. Brocklesby and Pothin, our Lewis gun effectively dispersing a German working party.

Trench Warfare.

On 31st May the sector held by the 1st Battalion was very heavily shelled, no fewer than 700 shells being sent over during the evening. Our artillery retaliated and silenced the enemy fire. Lieut. Chambers, one of the last officers joined, was wounded, and 19 other ranks.

The damage done to the South Staffords' trenches was considerable, but in spite of an attempt during the night by the Germans to bomb our trenches, which we checked, the work of repairing and making good the wire was carried on until the 1st Battalion was relieved by the 2nd Queen's, and proceeded to shelters in Grantown.

On the 18th June, C.S.M. E. S. Cox was given Commissioned rank, and on the same date Lieut.-Colonel R. M. Ovens, C.M.G., returned from leave and resumed command of the Battalion.

For the rest of the month they were in Brigade Reserve, and on June 23rd were attached to the 20th Brigade, practising and preparing for the great offensive on the Somme. They had moved up from Corbie to the vicinity of Bray-sur-Somme, a large village behind the lines opposite Mametz.

---

(1) Among the wounded Officers were :—
Capt. C. G. Limbery, O.C. "C" Company.
1st Lieut. W. R. English-Murphy, Grenade Officer.
2nd Lieut. G. L. Boone, Lewis Gun Officer.
2nd Lieut. Warwick Hall.
Other ranks wounded included :—
R.S.M. C. Hopkins (seriously).
C.S.M. A. Wolverson.
Sergt. H. Coxon.
Corpl. R. Cole.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



OFFICERS, 1st BATTALION.
Corbie, Bray-sur-Somme, May, 1916.
(For names, see p. 467.)

PLATE 11.

To face p. 177.

Digitized by Google

During the week preceding the offensive they were billeted in dug-outs in "Happy Valley," amongst the guns.

Lieut.-Colonel R. M. Ovens, C.M.G., was in command, and the Battalion Officers had been with it since Loos in 1915. The men were veterans, highly-trained, and the Battalion was in excellent fighting form. Lieut. W. Booth was Adjutant, and the Company commanders were:—Captain Snape, "A" Company; Captain White, "B" Company; Captain Limbery, "C" Company; while Lieut. Warwick Hall was in temporary command of "D" Company; 2nd Lieut. Lloyd, Lewis Gun Officer, and Lieut. W. R. English-Murphy, Bombing Officer. The preliminary bombardment by our artillery began on June 24th, and lasted without intermission till July 1st.

On the last night of June, 1916, about 7.30 p.m., the old 38th moved up from "Happy Valley" to the trenches.(1) Battalion Headquarters were at Minden Post, in a spacious dug-out. Lieut.-Colonel R. M. Ovens, C.M.G., was called away to act as Corps and Intelligence Officer, and the command of the Battalion devolved upon Major R. J. Morris.

There was some fitful shelling by the enemy on the way up. The Battalion was very compact, and a normal trench area of one Battalion was filled by four Battalions, so that movement in the trenches during the night was difficult. The 2nd Gordons were on the left, forming part of the 20th Infantry Brigade, 7th Division, and on the Battalion's right were the 22nd Manchesters, part of the 91st Brigade, with the 21st Manchesters in support, and the 2nd Queen's Royal West Surrey Regiment in Reserve. To the 91st Infantry Brigade was given the task of capturing Mametz village.

Artillery Preparation.

At 6.30 a.m. on July 1st our artillery opened with redoubled fury in a last concentrated bombardment of the German trenches.

The shell fire at the Battle of Loos had exceeded anything done in previous wars, but even that, big as it was, was merely a trifle compared to the opening of the Battle of the Somme. No such colossal expenditure of shells had ever been attempted before, much less dreamt of. The very earth rocked with the violence of the concussion, and the noise was so deafening that it was difficult to hear men shout even a yard away; yet, strangest of all, a lark singing overhead was heard clear and distinct, and was much commented upon by the men. Fortunately, the 1st Battalion had suffered few casualties during the night from the enemy's fire. A thick fog

(1) For details of this battle of the Somme, I am indebted to A/Lieut.-Colonel W. R. English-Murphy, D.S.O., M.C.

Digitized by Google

enveloped the countryside, but about 7 a.m. the fog lifted, and the objective of the 1st Battalion was clearly seen. At 7.30 a.m. the 1st Battalion went "over the top." On each flank from Fricourt on the left, to the country towards Montauban on the right, a long line of bayonets surged forwards. A lively machine gun fire and shrapnel greeted them, but the old 38th never faltered. The attack was pushed forward very successfully, and with very few casualties, until the whole Battalion was in Mametz, where a large number of Germans were encountered. The men advanced as if on parade, they swept forward in regular lines, and "to one who followed their track the regularity of their advance was astonishing, for the dead lay aligned as if on some parade."(1)

The German trenches were flattened out by our bombardment, but many prisoners of war were found in their dug-outs, men dazed and bewildered with the awful hell of the bombardment they had endured. They said it was not war, but murder. They forgot what they had done when they held the whip-hand with their artillery in the earlier days of the war, and did not like the dose of their own medicine they had to swallow in this attack.

Attack on Mametz.

About 8 a.m. Lieut. Warwick Hall, commanding "D" Company, sent a message back that they were held up on the south side of Mametz, and asked for reinforcements. Casualties had been rather heavy, and a pause ensued at the edge of the village. Captains Snape and Hallam did good work in reorganisation, and the 21st Manchesters, being sent in to support, by 11.30 a.m. the position was consolidated.

The first Officer in the village was 2nd Lieut. S. Potter, he advanced rapidly, and with his platoon he swept through the village and dug himself in on the farther side, this position he maintained, although surrounded by the enemy, until 12 noon, when the rest of the Battalion finally succeeded in reaching him and clearing its objective. He was awarded the D.S.O. for his most gallant action, under heavy fire and splendidly carried out.

Lieut. W. R. English-Murphy succeeded in bringing up about 80 men to Captain's Snape and Hallam, whose Company had been sadly thinned out.

The 1st Battalion now held Dantzig Alley, a trench running through the centre of Mametz, and had gained, and was consolidating the whole of its objective, with the exception of "Bunny Alley." Heavy shelling and machine gun fire

(1) Buchan, History of the War.

Digitized by Google

hampered the 1st South Staffords and the Gordons, so that progress was difficult. "The heat was intense, and the men's tunics were black with sweat."

In capturing Dantzig Alley, Captain C. S. Limbery (a most gallant Officer who had served at the first Battle of Ypres) was killed while leading his Company. Captain G. White, who had previously been shot in the neck and refused to go back, was also killed. Lieut. S. A. Webber, a splendid young Officer, was among the killed in this attack.

Lieut. Warwick Hall, had his right arm blown off and died from his wounds. The regimental bombers, under Lieut. W. R. English-Murphy, had a busy time "mopping up" and clearing the houses and dug-outs where the enemy resisted bravely.

About 1 p.m. the 1st Battalion surged forward again, and Lieut. C. de Trafford led a most gallant attack on "Bunny Alley," a trench just in rear of Mametz, clearing it and taking about 200 prisoners. In the afternoon the Battalion Headquarters moved into Mametz, and on reaching the village found that the final objective had not been captured. Major R. J. Morris, with great skill, at once reorganised all the troops in the village, allotted each a task, and sent the following message to the Brigade Headquarters at 6 p.m. "On reaching Mametz I found 80 men of the 2nd Gordons, two Companies of the Royal Warwicks, and about one and a half Companies of Manchesters, with 500 1st South Staffords. . . . The general line held by units was, Dantzig Alley from east to west running through the village. After a short conference I ordered the whole force to reorganise and advance to the final objective and forthwith consolidate, this is now in progress."(1)

Capture of Mametz.

The Gordons, who had received a severe handling on the flank, were now enabled to gain their final objective, and this was held. During these operations about 150 prisoners and two machine guns were captured.

Of the 21 Officers of the 1st South Staffords who had gone "over the top" in the morning, only 11 were now left, and of other ranks the casualties were about 230. Most of the casualties occurred after the Battalion had taken Dantzic Alley.(2)

---

(1) Battalion War Diary.

(2) As a result of the day's fighting, the casualties among the Officers were :—Killed : Capt. C. R. Limbery, 2nd Lieut. (T/Capt.) Geo. Waite, 2nd Lieut. S. A. Webber, 2nd Lieut. P. H. Emberton. Died of Wounds : 2nd Lieut. Warwick Hall. Wounded : Lieut. Eric Hindsley, Lieut. R. L. Hibberdine, 2nd Lieut. J. P. Lloyd, 2nd Lieut. G. E. Holdsworth, 2nd Lieut. W. H. Ratcliffe, and 300 other ranks.

Digitized by Google

During this action the 1st South Staffords captured machine guns, automatic rifles, portable telephones and a great quantity of stores of all kinds.

During the night there was occasional shelling of their position by the enemy, but no counter-attack developed, and the work of consolidation was carried on under the command of Colonel Norman, of the 21st Manchester Regiment. Patrols and listening posts were out in front all night, and Lieuts. Smith and Brocklesby (1st South Staffords) came up for duty and relieved the tired Officers of some of their work. On the morning of July 2nd all was quiet, and a Company of the Royal Irish Rifles moved up into the village to support the 1st Battalion in case of counter-attacks. There was occasional shelling of our trenches by the enemy, but the greatest difficulty was in obtaining water for the men, it being almost impossible to get rations up to the line they were holding. Soon after daybreak the 1st Battalion was reorganised, and stragglers from other units were sorted out and returned to their Battalions. At 10.45 a.m. a message was received that "the 17th Division would attack Fricourt."

Holding Mametz.

While this attack was in progress the Germans shelled the 1st South Staffords very heavily, but there were few casualties, and the Battalion helped in the attack by severe machine gun and rifle fire, which they opened on parties of Boche escaping. Of one party of about 200 Germans, all were killed or wounded, except 10, who got away. During the afternoon the Battalion was again heavily shelled for 10 minutes, the casualties for the day being about 15 other ranks.

At 9.20 p.m. the same night, the following messages were received from Brigade Headquarters:—"Sir Henry Rawlinson wires:—'Please convey to my old friends, 7th Division, my best congratulations on their splendid work yesterday. It is a great pleasure to me once more to thank them for their determination and success. The Corps Commander has the greatest satisfaction in forwarding this. General Watts adds his congratulations, and is prouder than ever of the old 7th Division.

" 'The Brigadier in forwarding these messages wishes to express to all ranks his gratitude and admiration of the splendid manner in which they have carried out the task allotted to them. The Commanding Officer wishes to add to these messages his deepest gratitude for the brilliant leadership and excellent work done by all ranks, and thanks them sincerely for the prompt way in which all orders were carried out.' "

Next morning, July 3rd, they were told that the 17th Division would capture Railway Alley and Bottom Wood,

Digitized by Google

and that the 21st Division would capture Shelter Wood and Birchtree Wood.

In the early morning the Battalion relieved the Royal Warwicks in Bunny Alley, and their new disposition was as follows:—Three Companies ("A," "C," "D") in Bunny Alley, one Company ("B") in Bunny Trench.

From their position it was easy to see the progress of the attack made by the 17th Division, and by 9.22 a.m. half Railway Alley had been captured, and the Division was advancing with very little opposition. The 1st South Staffords were reinforced during the morning by 7 Officers and 15 other ranks. Soon after 6 p.m. a message was received from Brigade Headquarters stating that the 17th and 21st Divisions had fulfilled their tasks, capturing a complete German Battalion, about 800 strong, including Colonel and Officers. The 1st Battalion then moved up into Bottom Wood, a small wood facing Mametz Wood. This position it held until the night of July 5th, when it was relieved under heavy shell fire by the Welsh Division, and marched back to Mericourt. While at Bottom Wood they had on their left flank the 8th South Staffords, of the 19th Division, and many greetings from old friends were exchanged.

In the Trenches Mametz.

They suffered much discomfort during the time they held Bottom Wood, for it rained heavily the whole time, and the enemy's machine gun and shell fire was very persistent and annoying. They had a few casualties, losing a few men during the relief, owing to shell fire, and went into rest billets at Buire.

They remained in rest billets at Buire until 11th July, when Lieut.-Colonel R. M. Ovens resumed command of the 1st Battalion, and then moved up to "The Citadel," and on the 13th moved up to Mansel Copse in Divisional Reserve.

Their rest was brief, but having filled up with a draft of 200 men they marched back.

On the night of 12-13th July the Battalion slept in the open in the old "No Man's Land" at Mansel Copse, near Mametz.

On the morning of July 14th, at 3.25 a.m., the 22nd Infantry Brigade of the 7th Division, attacked Bazentin le Petit, and Bazentin le Grand villages, and the surrounding woods. After bitter fighting, and after repulsing many heavy counter-attacks all day, they succeeded in making good their footing. The 1st South Staffords moved up under heavy shell fire and took up position in Death Alley about 10 a.m., and were in close Reserve. They dug in, but were subjected to

Attack on Bazentin.

Digitized by Google

heavy shell fire all day, and the valley was drenched with gas. At 4.15 p.m. orders were received by Lieut.-Colonel R. M. Ovens, C.M.G., to attack High Wood (Bois de Fourreaux) with his own Battalion, and the 2nd Queen's Regiment under Colonel Longbourne, and the two battalions left Death Alley, and in single file moved up to the ridge beside Bazentin le Petit, and formed up. By 6.15 p.m. the Battalion was in position for attack, having been subjected to very heavy shell fire while moving up to position.

The formation of the 1st South Staffords was as follows:—"A" Company on the right, "B" Company on the left, "C" Company in support of "A" Company, and "D" Company in support of "C" Company. The attack was launched at 7 p.m., and the South Staffords moved magnificently over 1,600 yards of open ground. They were on the left next the German "Switch Trench," with the 2nd Queen's Regiment on their right.

Attack on High Wood.

Lieut.-Colonel R. M. Ovens, C.M.G., was in command, he having returned to the Battalion. His coolness and sang froid were wonderful. He finally stood on a slight mound on the top of the ridge, and careless of bullets and shell fire gave the signal to advance by waving his cane. High Wood showed dark and formidable about a mile away, corn and grass land surrounded it. No other infantry advanced with the 91st Brigade.

About 100 yards from the start the men were seen to halt for a moment and begin rapid firing, pressing forward directly afterwards. They had come up against a number of Germans who were 1,500 yards in front of Bois Foureaux (High Wood), located in shell holes and hollows of the ground. Our men most gallantly bombed a machine gun detachment and took many prisoners. The 1st South Staffords were on the left of the advance, 2nd Queen's West Surrey Regiment on the right. At the moment of starting the advance a troop of the 7th Dragoon Guards and a troop of Deccan Horse charged on the right flank. The men cheered the cavalry as they swept past, who were met by heavy machine gun fire, which thinned their ranks, but taking advantage of the cover afforded by the sloping ground and growing corn, they dismounted, and looked after the flanks of the advance, having ridden down and silenced a troublesome machine gun. "It was a clean and workmanlike job, and the news of it exhilarated the whole line," for it was the first bit of open fighting since 1914.

During the advance two of our aeroplanes swooped down in front and fired with great effect upon the enemy, helping the advance considerably.

Digitized by Google

The Germans enfiladed the Battalion on the left, but the old 38th pressed on by small rushes, and entered Bois Foureaux about 8.30 p.m., forcing their way through the wood to the eastern side. Casualties had been many, Lieut. W. Booth was wounded, and Lieut. W. R. English-Murphy took over his duties.

High Wood still remained to be cleared, and by superhuman efforts on the part of Lieut.-Colonel R. M. Ovens in rounding up stragglers and sending them up under his Adjutant, a good effort of organisation became possible. About 9.30 p.m., led in person by Lieut.-Colonel R. M. Ovens, the Battalion advanced in long lines through the wood.

It was quite undamaged by shell fire, and full of thick undergrowth. The enemy resisted stubbornly in small parties, but finally, about midnight, the wood was cleared, save for one circular redoubt held by the enemy. Consolidation was begun, and the front of the wood divided into three sectors under Captain E. de Trafford, M.C., Lieut. Tunnicliffe, and Lieut. W. R. English-Murphy. 2nd Lieut. J. Potter, D.S.O., made a gallant attempt to drive the enemy out of the north-east corner of the wood and fell mortally wounded, and Lieut. F. Seckington, who displayed great courage, was reported missing and never heard of again; he was a brave and cheery officer.

The Ordeal of High Wood.

There was continuous fighting during the night of the 14/15th July, and casualties were heavy, while the men suffered great hardships owing to the difficulty in bringing up rations and water. Next morning the Germans made a counter attack, but it was crushed by our rifle fire. The position was a dangerous one, a salient over a mile in depth had been driven into the German position, with only one Brigade stretched over it. The 1st South Staffords held most of the apex, with 2nd Queen's West Surrey Regiment, and 21st and 22nd Manchesters watching the flanks. The German third line ran through this wood, and the 1st South Staffords had the honour of being the first British troops to penetrate the German third line system.

During the time they were holding this position the Germans opened a savage bombardment which never ceased day or night. It was difficult to evacuate the wounded, for they were shelled from three sides. Rations and water were nil, and hunger and thirst were added pangs to their misery. Eagerly they looked for fresh reinforcements to come up on their flanks, but none came, and from the night of July 13th till the morn of July 16th the 1st South Staffords lived in this inferno and defied every effort of the enemy to dislodge them. Finding further progress impossible with the remnants of

Digitized by Google

men left, the 38th, with the 2nd Queen's, 21st and 22nd Manchesters and detachments of the Worcesters and Highland Light Infantry "dug in" both inside and outside the wood, determined to hold the position at all costs. At 2.30 a.m. on the 16th July orders were received to withdraw from the position, won at such awful cost, and fall back through the 51st Division, who were coming up in rear. Lieut.-Colonel R. M. Ovens, C.M.G., Senior Officer present, carried out the retirement in the steadiest manner, under heavy fire, and the Battalion reached Mametz about 5.30 a.m. on July 16th.

Withdrawal from High Wood.

During the night previous to evacuating the position, as many wounded as possible were brought back. To the 1st South Staffords was given the honour of providing the rear guard, and this was placed under the command of Lieut. W. R. English-Murphy. "Through early morning the rear guard listened to their comrades withdrawing, and wondered if they would get back. At dawn the enemy evidently suspected there was something afoot and opened a heavy bombardment, subsequently following it up with an attack. The gallant 1st South Staffords' rear guard, fighting hard, drove them back, and the wood now being clear, themselves withdrew. The enemy shelling never slackened, and a heavy barrage was falling on the rear. Luckily, through a gap left in it, the 1st South Staffords found a way out, and about 7 a.m. on July 16th, joined their comrades at Mametz. For three days and nights without a break the old 38th had endured hell, but never gave up a foot of their gains, wearied and unconquered they held on until orders were received to retire. High Wood subsequently cost many lives to retake, when a little timely help by reinforcements on the flanks would have secured the hardly won victory. The Battalion had successfully achieved the object for which it and the 2nd Queen's had been sent, viz.:—to cover other troops engaged in consolidating positions already won in rear, and held it, until orders were received to fall back."(1)

They moved from Mansel Copse to Dernancourt on 21st July, and thence to Vaux-en-Amien-Oise, where they remained resting, cleaning up, and training until August 12th. While in rest billets at Vaux, on August 3rd, they were inspected by Lieut.-General Sir H. Rawlinson, Commanding 4th Army. During this period of rest "B" and "C" Com-

(1) *Ex.* inform. Lieut.-Colonel W. R. English-Murphy, D.S.O., M.C. The casualties were:—
Officers—Killed: 2nd Lieut. E. L. Ward, 2nd Lieut. E. W. Mackrory, 2nd Lieut. J. Potter, D.S.O., Lieut. F. Seckington. Wounded: Lieut. N. J. Wragg, 2nd Lieuts. H. Brocklesby, J. D. Williamson, E. W. Booth, V. R. S. White, C. McL. Miller, O. H. Smith.
Other Ranks—13 killed, 98 wounded, and 26 missing.

Digitized by Google

panies played in the 1st round of the Mametz Cup Football Competition. "B" Company beat the 91st T.M. Battery by 5 to 1 goals, while "C" Company lost to "D" Company 21st Manchesters by 2 goals to 1.

Rest Billets and Sports.

This Football Cup had been presented to the Brigade by its Commander, Brig.-General J. R. M. Minshull-Ford, commanding 91st Infantry Brigade. The Battalion passed into the final round and won the Cup on August 10th, "A" Company, 1st South Staffords beating "B" Company, 21st Manchesters by 4 goals to 1.

On August 12th the Battalion left Vaux and moved near to Dernancourt, where they received a fraternal visit from their comrades of the 2nd Battalion. While here the Regimental Sports were held, and the 1st South Staffords won 19 firsts out of 21 events, with 17 second and 16 third places. The prizes were distributed by Brig.-General J. R. Minshull-Ford, commanding 91st Brigade. Captain C. S. Burt of the 1st South Staffords, acted as Hon. Secretary for the sports.

On August 24th 2nd Lieut. (Temporary Lieut.) W. R. English-Murphy took over duty as Act.-Adjutant, vice Lieut. E. W. Booth (Adjutant) who was admitted to hospital.

Attack on Delville Wood.

The Battalion, which was very weak when they went into rest billets, had now refitted, and a number of old Officers, Captain's Twiss and Burt, Lieuts. Ball and Mitton had rejoined, and about 4 p.m. on August 29th they received orders to move up into the line at Delville Wood, to relieve the 1st Royal Welsh Fusiliers, in sector east of Delville Wood, and south-east trenches Hop Valley—Beer Trench to Pilsen Lane, taking over a frontage of roughly 500 yards. The move was a hurried one, Colonel Ovens and Company Commanders being up looking at the line in Montauban, and the Adjutant had to move the Battalion and inform Colonel Ovens on the way up. "It was in a thunderstorm and heavy rain and shell fire that we went in. Delville Wood was beyond description, not a tree was standing, the ground one mass of soft powdered earth which, in the rain, became liquid mud. The dead, about two layers deep, lay everywhere, the stench was fearful. It was shelled day and night." The ground had been taken by the South Africans' previously, and the 38th had great difficulty in getting up, the men were drenched to the skin, while the roads and trenches were almost impassable owing to the water and mud. On arrival at the trenches the Battalion was disposed as follows:—Two Companies in front line, "A" on the right with 2 Lewis guns, "B" on the left with 4 Lewis guns, "C" Company in support in Diagonal Trench and vicinity, and "D" Company in reserve in Folly Trench. Battalion Headquarters were in a shed leaning against a bank,

Digitized by Google

about 8 feet square, and situate in York Alley. The relief being completed about midnight of the 29th August.

Next day was a day of heavy shelling, gas, and high explosives. Trenches, save in a few places, did not exist—they were made by shell craters linked up. These were full of liquid mud, waist deep. Digging was done all night, but nothing could remove the awful mud, for the enemy blew the parapets flat during the day. The dressing station was destroyed by shell fire, and owing to the awful condition of the ground, and the shelling, it took ration parties four hours to cover about 250 yards, from Battalion Headquarters to the front line.

In Delville Wood.

For a portion of the time they were in Delville Wood the right flank of the Battalion was in the air, being separated by 50 yards from the left of the next Battalion, until the 21st Manchesters came up and dug in. The 9th King's Royal Rifles were on the left, but were relieved by the 1st North Staffords on the 30th. All this day the heavy rains continued, while the enemy's artillery was very active in shelling the support line, putting up an intense barrage in Delville Wood from 12 noon to 2 p.m. On August 31st, about 1 a.m., the Germans put a heavy barrage on the edge of Delville Wood, cutting "A" and "B" Companies' communications. This was kept up till 1 p.m., when the enemy commenced bombing up "Ale Alley" and "Bitter Trench," following up this attack in dense masses. Lieut. G. H. Jones-Mitton, commanding "B" Company, at once organised counter bombing parties, and lined up "Hop Alley" to snipe enemy. The 1st South Staffords gave the Boche a hot reception with rapid fire, and the attack was beaten off. Captain C. S. Burt, commanding "C" Company, came up and reinforced at 2 p.m., when the enemy's barrage commenced again. Lieut. G. H. Jones-Mitton sent up S.O.S. signal and our guns opened a curtain fire, but behind the attacking Germans, who now reached our front line. After some hand-to-hand fighting they were again driven back by bombing and sniping. The shortage of bombs was now becoming serious, as owing to the severity of the German barrage on our lines, only a few boxes reached our front line. The bombardment was renewed with redoubled violence by the enemy, who seemed determined to dislodge the 1st South Staffords from their position. The object of this fierce attack was "Mystery Corner," a point in the salient that had been thrust into the German lines between Ginchy and Flers.

All the 1st South Staffords' Lewis guns were now blown up, but the 1st North Staffords, who were on the left of the Battalion, lent them one to carry on with. With thinned

Digitized by Google

ranks and fast diminishing ammunition the old 38th faced the gathering storm. About 4 p.m. the storm broke, dense masses of the enemy in columns of Companies, preceded by bombers with an unlimited supply of bombs, assaulted our lines. Heavy hand-to-hand fighting ensued, and the struggle swayed backwards and forwards. Captain Burt led charge after charge, till "C" Company had dwindled to less than a dozen men. 2nd Lieut. (Act.-Capt.) W. Smyth was killed. "The enemy still put down a severe barrage on our communication trenches, and all our store of bombs was exhausted."

At about 4.30 p.m. five enemy aeroplanes flew over our lines and dropped signals. Then the Germans opened an intense barrage behind the 1st South Staffords' front line and "Hop" and "Bitter" Trench. A handful of bombers, under Lce.-Corporal Dale, rushed a Company of Boche, firing rifle grenades into them, doing fearful havoc, and finally broke them. More than 50 per cent. of the effectives of "A," "B" and "C" Companies were gone, when the enemy commenced to systematically bomb up "Ale Alley" and "Bitter Trench." 2nd Lieut. T. E. Henderson reported that he was in "Ale Alley" and had no bombs, and was being pressed hard. The enemy rushed the right of "B" Company's line at the junction of "Bitter Trench" and "Hop Alley," and during this attack "a sergeant of the Machine Gun Corps (unfortunately nameless) sat at his gun firing point blank into the approaching masses, rank after rank of Germans went down, and this gallant hero sergeant never ceased firing until the enemy were upon him and he was killed by a bomb."

Capture of Delville Wood.

At 8 p.m. the remainder of "B" and "C" Companies were forced to vacate "Hop Alley," having no bombs, and being very hard pressed by the enemy. Captain C. S. Burt and Lieut. G. H. Jones-Mitton then rallied the remainder of the two Companies, about 40 men, and held shell holes in Delville Wood, from which they were able to snipe the enemy in "Hop Alley." Everywhere, the survivors of the 38th grouped round their Officers and fought with the desperation of heroes. The left platoon of "B" Company in "Ale Alley," owing to casualties and lack of bombs, had to fall back in the 1st North Staffords' trenches, where "A" Company, under 2nd Lieut. Henderson's orders, made to a point 35 yards down "Edge Trench," and erected a barricade. The enemy followed up strongly with an ample supply of bombs, but were held up by our rifle fire. The Trench Mortars were out of action, and there was very little artillery support on this flank. Desperate fighting ensued, then, wonder of wonders, the Boche hesitated, wavered, and finally broke, leaving a few survivors in our trenches, but the ridge upon which Delville Wood stands was secured.

Digitized by Google

During the night of the 31st August the Germans continually showed their position by forked green and red rockets, and their snipers endeavoured to work round our flanks. Shelling was continuous during the night, but no fresh infantry attacks developed.

The curious feature of this attack was that the German troops attacking us appeared to be perfectly fresh, dressed mostly in khaki, with steel helmets, wearing no equipment, but carrying an unlimited supply of bombs and signal lights. Our men sent continual messages back from the front line for bombs and water, but owing to the severity of the enemy's barrage, these failed to get through.

In the early morning of the 1st September the 1st South Staffords, such as were left of them, were relieved by the 2nd Queen's Royal West Surrey Regiment, and went into rest billets at Montauban. Tired and weary, reduced almost to a bare Company, the Battalion had added another glorious page to its history, for fighting against odds of at least 6 to 1, it had held its ground.(1)

The fighting strength of the 1st Battalion going into the trenches was approximately 18 Officers and 700 other ranks.

Shortly after being relieved by the 2nd Queen's the Battalion left Montauban and went into rest billets at Doudelaineville, but before doing so, they, on September 2nd, found a working party of 400 men, under Lieut. E. Bell, for supporting the attack and capture of Ginchy by the 16th Division. They were engaged in wiring a strong point when the working party had to down tools and take part in the fighting.

Capture of Ginchy.

On the 13th September, Lieut.-Colonel R. M. Ovens, C.M.G., was appointed to the command of the 149th Infantry Brigade, with temporary rank of Brigadier-General, and relinquished the command of the 1st Battalion. Major R. J. Morris (second in command) assuming command in his place.

They remained here resting until the end of October, and on 26th September Captain (Major) A. B. Beauman, D.S.O., rejoined and assumed command of the Battalion.

---

(1) From the 29th to 31st August the 1st South Staffords had suffered the following casualties :—

Killed.—2nd Lieut. (Temp. Capt.) J. W. G. Smith.
2nd Lieut. W. C. Carbonnell (died of wounds).
Wounded.—2nd Lieuts. H. J. Emery, E. S. Cox, G. F. Elliott, G. W. Bellingham, A. T. Penketh, F. A. J. Caryll.
Missing.—2nd Lieut. T. E. Henderson.
Capt. A. O. P. Reynolds, R.A.M.C. (gas poisoning).
Other Ranks.—35 killed, 84 wounded, 146 missing. Total, 265.

Digitized by Google

During the month of October, while in Brigade Reserve, at Red Lodge, Romarin Camp, they were reinforced by the following Officers:—

Captain H. J. C. Leland, D.S.O. (assumed command of "D" Company). Lieuts. R. L. Hibberdine; A. H. Johnson.

2nd Lieuts. G. Bygrave; F. P. Crosse; W. H. Curry; G. L. T. Eaton; J. L. Gloster; B. F. Kitson; and C. E. Philcox; who rejoined from hospital.

Captain H. J. C. Leland, D.S.O., was transferred to the 22nd Manchester Regiment, as second in command, and Capt. D. C. Twiss resumed command of "D" Company.

On October 6th, while in Romarin Camp, the 1st Battalion was reinforced by the following Officers:—

Lieut. E. Hindsley.

2nd Lieuts. J. F. Bygott; T. H. Longmore; and D. M. Chambers.

The casualties suffered by the 1st Battalion in the Somme battles had been heavy, and many of the Officers and men were new to the Regiment. Still, there was a sufficient proportion of old hands left to keep up the spirit and maintain the traditions of the famous old 38th.

From Romarin Camp, on October 13th the 1st Battalion took over the Douve sub-sector, and on the night of October 15/16th the Battalion carried out a brilliantly successful raid on the enemy trenches, obtaining valuable results.

Raid on German Trench.

"The point selected for the raid was were the River Douve made a loop in front of the German trenches. This locality had been very carefully and daringly reconnoitred by 2nd Lieuts. W. A. Dickens and F. P. Crosse in broad daylight, and it had been established that the Germans occupied a series of sapheads on their bank of the River Douve, about 50 yards in advance of their front line trenches.

"The raid was carried out by three parties, 2nd Lieuts. Dickens and Crosse each with eight men, and Sergt. Worrall with five men. In addition Corporal Fletcher, with six men, was detailed to act as flank guard, and six men carried three light wooden bridges that had been specially prepared by the Sappers."(1)

By 10.30 p.m. the various groups had assembled in "No Man's Land" without observation by the enemy, in spite of a bright moon. At 10.50 p.m. our artillery crashed down on

(1) *Ex.* inform. Lieut.-Colonel A. B. Beauman, D.S.O.

Digitized by Google

the enemy's front line, and the raiding parties, rushing forward, put down a bomb barrage on the enemy's bank of the stream to cover the bridge laying. One bridge was successfully thrown over the river, and all three parties got across. 2nd Lieut. W. A. Dickens leading, and turning to the left, he and his party captured two Germans, who were immediately sent back to our lines. 2nd Lieut. Crosse and his party, turning to the right, after crossing the temporary bridge, were not so fortunate, for although they found traces of occupation, the enemy had managed to escape. By 11.15 p.m. the whole raiding party were back in our own trenches, having destroyed the bridges before they retired. Our casualties were slight. 2nd Lieut. Dickens and two other ranks slightly wounded, while the prisoners required for identification had been obtained. As a result of this successful little raid 2nd Lieuts. W. A. Dickens and F. P. Crosse received the Military Cross, and Sergeant Worrall and Corporal Fletcher the Military Medal. Nothing further of importance happened during this tour of the trenches, and on October 21st the 1st Battalion moved into support in the Red Lodge Camp, remaining there until October 29th, when they moved back to Brigade Reserve at Romarin Camp. Their period in this quiet locality was now over, for orders were received from the Division to move back to the Second Army Training Area west of St. Omer. Leaving on November 2nd the Battalion marched to La Creche, next day to Meteren, where they halted for five days. The march was resumed on November 9th, and on November 11th Bayenghem was reached—two nights being spent at Wallon Capel and St. Omer. The night at St. Omer will be remembered, for the whole Battalion was billeted in one building, while the Officers had the all too rare experience of being able to dine together with the band in attendance.

Trench Warfare.

Their stay in this training area was short, evidently the 7th Division was now considered to be sufficiently rested, for it was ordered south to the Somme district, where considerable fighting was still in progress. The Battalion marched the whole distance from Bayenghem, November 15th, until it reached Mailly Maillet on November 23rd. Subsequently, the following Order was issued by Major-General Sir Herbert Watts, K.C.B., C.M.G.:—"The Divisional Commander wishes to convey to the troops his appreciation of the excellent march discipline displayed by all ranks during the march from the 2nd Army Area. He considers that the general behaviour of the troops and their marching are worthy of the best traditions of the Service, and reflects the greatest credit on all concerned."(1)

(1) *Ex.* inform. Lieut.-Colonel A. B. Beauman, D.S.O.

Digitized by Google

The battle of the Ancre was only just subsiding, and the 1st Battalion on November 24th took over the line in front of Beaumont Hamel. Here, there was practically no front line, for owing to the smashing up of the captured German trenches no proper trench system existed, and to make matters worse, the heavy rain had turned the sodden ground into a sea of mud. Enemy snipers caused several casualties during the relief, and on the first night, 24/25th November, a strong patrol under 2nd Lieut. E. P. Crosse, M.C., who had been sent out to discover the enemy's position at an important point, had a lively scrap with the enemy. They succeeded in their mission, but 2nd Lieut. E. P. Crosse, M.C., was severely wounded and two other ranks were reported missing.

Nothing of importance happened during the rest of this tour, and on November 29th the Battalion was relieved by the 20th Manchesters, and went back to a rest camp at Bertrancourt, "a muddy and none too comfortable rest camp."

"On November 30th Sergeant A. Flowers (Transport Sergeant) was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal for long and valuable services in the field."

On December 6th the Battalion was back again in the trenches, relieving the 2nd Border Regiment, in what was called the left sub-sector, just north of Beaumont Hamel, and overlooked by the high ground round Serre.

"At this time it must surely have been without any exception the most unpleasant bit of line on the Western front. Constantly fought over and ploughed and re-ploughed by shells. Some peculiar quality of the soil had produced a stretch of mud which quite outdid anything that Flanders could produce. In most places it was literally unpassable, and everywhere it was knee deep. In this sector at various times during the winter of 1916/17 several men were drowned in this morass in spite of all the efforts of their comrades to extricate them. In addition the enemy sprinkled it with shells, while his snipers, operating from higher and drier ground, were active and deadly. Both for danger and discomfort it was hard to beat."(1) **Trench Warfare.**

The 1st Battalion occupied this sector from December 6th to 8th, and did excellent work in improving the trenches, besides conducting aggressive patrols against the Germans. On the conclusion of this tour, Brig.-General H. R. Cumming, G.O.C. 22nd Infantry Brigade, sent the following message:— "The Brigadier wishes to place on record his appreciation of

(1) *Ex.* inform. Lieut.-Colonel A. B. Beauman, D.S.O.

Digitized by Google

the splendid work done by the Battalion during the recent tour in the trenches."

Trench Warfare.

After a short rest at Mailly Maillet, on December 14th, the Battalion again returned to the left sub-sector, finding it, if possible, worse than ever. Owing to the heavy rain the trenches were in a deplorable condition, but everyone worked with a will to improve matters, and when this four days' tour was ended, the Battalion had maintained its reputation of always leaving trenches much better than when they took them over. Christmas, 1916, was spent in a camp at Bertrancourt, where, owing to the excellent dinner prepared by Lieut. Wardle, the Quartermaster, in spite of mud and bad weather, everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

On December 27th the Battalion moved to billets in Mailly Maillet Wood and village. The latter had been badly knocked about by shell fire, and was anything but desirable as a residential locality, but by this time the Battalion were inured to hardship and discomfort.

Digitized by Google



By permission. *Official photograph.*

IN DELVILLE WOOD.

PLATE 12.

To face p. 192

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE RECORD OF THE 1ST BATTALION, 1917.

Beaumont Hamel—Capture of Munich Trench—The Big German Retreat—Attack on Serre Ridge—Attack on Croisilles—The Fight for Bullecourt—Summer in the Hindenburg Line—Training—The Great Battles of October—Rest and Re-organisation—Move to Italian Front.

THE New Year opened quietly, but on January 10th the Battalion moved up to Beaumont Hamel, under orders to attack and capture the German front line, known as Munich Trench. Plans for the attack had been maturing for over a month, but bad weather had caused numerous postponements. Munich Trench was an important position, situated along the crest of a flat topped ridge about a mile east of Beaumont Hamel. From it the enemy had observation of most of our communications, and its capture was of the greatest importance. Three Battalions of the Brigade had been allotted for its capture on a front of about 2,000 yards, the centre section being given to the 1st South Staffords.(1)

Attack on Munich Trench.

The forming up was completed successfully during the night of 10th/11th January, and at 6.45 a.m., 11th January, the Battalion advanced to the attack in a thick fog under cover of a strong barrage. The enemy put up a poor resistance. The position was captured without much difficulty, although machine guns caused considerable casualties, and in some places the ground proved impassable and the attackers became bogged. Munich Trench itself was hardly recognisable amidst the sea of mud, and a new line had to be formed during the day by consolidating a series of shell holes in front of the captured position. Unfortunately the fog lifted about 10 a.m. and the Staffords' new line was heavily shelled and accurately sniped throughout the day, considerable casualties being suffered.

During the night of the 11th January posts were pushed still further forward, completely denying all the high ground to the enemy. Next day was comparatively quiet, although two posts were blown in by a violent bombardment during the afternoon. The Battalion was relieved on the night of January 12th, and then returned to camp and billets at Mailly

(1) From this period until May 25th, 1918, I am indebted to Lieut.-Colonel A. B. Beauman, D.S.O., who kindly supplied material for it.

Digitized by Google

Maillet. During this highly successful operation over 200 prisoners were taken by the Brigade.(1)

The period January 13th to 20th was spent at Mailly Maillet in cleaning up after the Munich Trench fighting, and while here the Battalion was reinforced by a large draft of men from home. During this period two important changes occurred on the Battalion Staff. Major R. J. Morris, D.S.O., who had performed the duties of Second-in-Command for a considerable time with ability and success, obtained temporary command of a Service Battalion of the Devonshire Regiment, and was succeeded by Captain C. D. Twiss. The latter was a Regular Officer who had come to France in 1914, with the Battalion, and had been wounded at the first battle of Ypres. He had rejoined during the summer of 1916, and had commanded a Company with success during the later phases of the Somme battles. Captain E. W. Booth, M.C., who, as Adjutant, had done splendid work in the summer battles and in reorganising the Battalion after the heavy casualties on the Somme, was obliged to relinquish his appointment owing to bad health, and joined the Staff as a learner. He was succeeded by Captain A. W. Lee, M.C., who, having previously seen much fighting with the Battalion during 1915, was destined to carry out the duties of Adjutant until the end of the war with conspicuous success.

Changes on Battalion Staff.

On January 21st the Battalion moved back to Rancheval for a period of rest, training and recreation. Rancheval was a quiet and pretty village, situated amidst pleasant downland country, about 12 miles from the line.

Unfortunately at this time a spell of intensely cold weather set in and lasted throughout our "rest period," hindering both training and sports.

On January 23rd a valuable reinforcement was received in Captain J. Snape, M.C. This Officer had many years' service in the Battalion and had acted as Regimental Sergeant Major throughout the strenuous times of 1915. After taking a commission he soon made his mark as an Officer and was awarded the M.C. for fine work at the capture of Mametz. On rejoining he took over the duties of Second-in-Command.(2)

---

(1) The 1st Battalion's casualty list was:—Killed, 8 other ranks; wounded, 5 Officers and 81 other ranks; missing, 1 Officer and 9 other ranks. One of the wounded Officers, Captain E. Bell, was severely hit when leading his Company to the attack. Fortunately, he recovered, after a long and critical struggle, from this, his second severe wound during the War.

(2) Major C. D. Twiss was attending the Senior Officers' Course at Aldershot.

Digitized by Google

In spite of the bitter cold, training and sports made good progress. The competition for the "Watts Football Cup" commenced and the Battalion team defeated in turn the R.A.M.C. (12—2) and the 21st Manchesters (7—2). On January 17th the Battalion took part in a ceremonial parade in honour of General Nivelle, at that time Commander-in-Chief of the French Army. Fog largely spoilt the effect of this parade.

Training and Sports.

On February 18th, the period of rest being at an end, the Battalion moved to Bus and on the following day to Bertrancourt.

Three days later the Battalion returned to the line, taking over the sector just north of Beaumont Hamel. Since the capture of Munich Trench the line had been advanced another thousand yards by intermittent fighting. Things had had no chance to settle down, no proper trenches or even posts had been dug and no satisfactory communications existed. Therefore it was obvious that only by the most herculean labour could things be got straight again. The Battalion set to work with enthusiasm and by working night and day some semblance of a satisfactory line was quickly evolved.

Trench Warfare.

On the morning of February 24th some daring daylight patrols, organised by Captain W. R. English-Murphy and C.S.M. G. Gardner, met with unexpected success, being able to advance without interference close up to what was believed to be the enemy front line. Later reports from other parts of the line also pointed to an enemy withdrawal. At 7 p.m. patrols were pushed out and seized without opposition Ten Tree Alley and Pendant Copse, two enemy strongholds at the foot of the Serre Ridge. At 11.30 p.m., February 24th, orders were received to advance on Serre Ridge at dawn, February 25th.

This was very short notice, as the Battalion was very scattered, communications were bad and all ranks were greatly fatigued by the heavy and continuous work of the last few days. To make matters worse a thick fog set in during the early hours of February 25th. Nevertheless the attack was successfully launched at 6 a.m., although, owing to the fog, both flanks were out of touch with units ordered to advance simultaneously. The attack made good progress, although the enemy put up some resistance with rearguards. These were driven back at the point of the bayonet. Direction was temporarily lost in the fog, but by 9.30 a.m. the whole of the Serre Ridge and what remained of the village had been captured. The fog gradually lifted during the day, the captured position was consolidated and touch gained on both flanks. During the night 25th/26th February the Battalion

Attack on Serre Ridge, February 25th.

Digitized by Google

was relieved and returned to Mailly Maillet, very tired but triumphant. After several years of trench warfare and trench battles, anything in the nature of open fighting was a new and pleasant experience for all of us.

On February 26th we moved to Bertrancourt and during the afternoon the semi-final of the "Watts Football Cup" was played. We defeated the 2nd Gordons by 7—2.

Our stay at Bertrancourt continued quietly until March 5th, when the Battalion moved back to Arqueves. Training and sports were carried on steadily. On March 11th the final for the "Watts Football Cup" was played. We won the cup by a 5—0 victory over the 24th Manchesters. On the 16th March the Battalion moved up to Bolton Camp and for the next few days was employed on the important work of re-making the Serre Road. Owing to the appalling condition of this road, our main line of forward communication, the pursuit of the retreating Germans had been greatly hindered.

The Big German Retreat.

On March 22nd we moved to Pusieux-au-mont, a much damaged village, recently evacuated by the Germans in their retreat, and on the following day on to Courcelles which had been almost completely demolished. After three days' rest, the Battalion took up positions in front of St. Leger, preparatory to an attack on Croisilles.

Croisilles formed an important outpost to the famous Hindenburg Line, which ran about a mile north-east of it. Until Croisilles was captured it was impossible to bring our guns close enough to effectually shell the immensely strong German main position.

It was thought at this time that the enemy did not intend to put up a serious resistance at Croisilles. An attack was therefore ordered by two Battalions, without waiting for sufficient guns to be brought up to put down an effective barrage.

Attack on Croisilles.

We formed the left Battalion of the attack, our left flank being entirely in the air. At 5.45 a.m. the attack was launched, and it was soon evident that the enemy was in great strength and meant to fight. The village of Croisilles and the surrounding sunken roads bristled with machine guns, which our light barrage was unable to silence. Our approaches to the village lay over a bare and exposed ridge, and a valley offering no cover of any kind to the attackers. In spite of heavy machine gun and rifle fire the attack was pressed with great determination, the right Company pushing forward to the enemy wire on the outskirts of the village. This was found to be uncut. As no further progress could be made, and casualties were considerable, this Company was

Digitized by Google

forced to withdraw slightly and take cover in a sunken road. Here they maintained themselves throughout the day under heavy shell fire. A strong enemy counter-attack, made with the object of cutting them off, was heavily defeated, largely owing to the splendid work of 2nd Lieut. W. H. Curry, who was now in command at this point. The left Company, under Captain W. A. Dickens, M.C., had at first made good progress, in spite of heavy machine gun fire. As they neared their objective, however. the enemy was able to bring terrific cross fire to bear and pinned them down to the line gained. Owing to the fact that no troops were attacking on the left, this Company's left flank was entirely exposed, while on the right a gap had occurred, owing to their rapid advance. The enemy was not slow to take advantage of this and developed a strong counter-attack. This Company was quickly outflanked and eventually completely surrounded. After a gallant resistance the bulk of the company were killed or captured.(1)

The Battalion was relieved on the night 28th/29th March and returned to Courcelles. Although the attack had not achieved its objective, our line had been considerably advanced and valuable information as to the enemy's dispositions had been obtained.

The following day was memorable for the fact that Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig honoured us with a surprise visit to Battalion Headquarters.

After a few days' rest at Courcelles, orders were received to renew the attack on Croisilles. On April 1st the Battalion moved up to the line. This attack started under much better auspices than the former one. The frontage to be attacked was much broader and our artillery had been considerably reinforced. The objective allotted to the Battalion was the railway embankment and cutting between Croisilles and Ecoust. The enemy suspected an attack and put down a heavy barrage during the forming up, without however seriously interfering with it. The attack was launched at 5.15 a.m., April 2nd, and was a complete success. The enemy was not in great strength but put up a fair resistance. This was quickly overcome, all objectives captured, and posts pushed out to within a few hundred yards of the Hindenburg Line. During the day the line of the railway was strongly

Capture of Croisilles.

(1) Casualties were :—Killed : Officers, 2; other ranks, 19. Wounded : Officers, 4; other ranks, 54. Missing : Officers, 1; other ranks, 56. The Battalion lost two gallant and useful Officers in Lieut. E. Hindsley and 2nd Lieut. J. S. Goodwin. Captain Dickens, M.C., a most promising and popular Officer, reported missing, was reported some weeks later a prisoner in Germany.

Digitized by Google

consolidated. We were relieved the same night in a blinding snowstorm and returned to Courcelles. During this successful operation 22 prisoners were captured by the Battalion. Our casualties totalled 1 Officer and 26 other ranks wounded.

On April 3rd the Battalion moved back to the ruined village of Pusieux and was employed on making roads and railways. On April 5th Captain C. D. Twiss rejoined from the Senior Officers' Course and took up the duties of Second-in-Command. On April 11th the Battalion was moved up to Logeast Wood in connection with the great 3rd Army attack on Arras, but the projected local attack was cancelled and we moved back to Pusieux on the following day.

Trench Warfare.

On April 7th the Battalion moved to Gommecourt and the following day took over the front line south-east of Croisilles. During the next few days the railway embankment, which formed one of our positions, was very heavily shelled, 5 being killed and 33 wounded, including 2 Officers. After this unfortunate tour in the line, on relief on April 22nd we proceeded to Gommecourt and thence to Logeast Wood (April 23rd).

After a period of rest and training the Battalion went into Brigade Support at St. Leger. While we occupied this position the 62nd Division carried out an unsuccessful attack on the Hindenburg Line (May 3rd). We were not drawn into this operation and on May 4th moved back to billets at Behagnies and Sapignies.

After a week spent in preparation and training orders were received to take part in an attack on Bullecourt. Since May 3rd, when the Australians had breached the famous Hindenburg Line south-east of Bullecourt, a continuous struggle had taken place in this locality. By heavy fighting the breach had been considerably enlarged, and now its northern limit was just south of Bullecourt. Of the village itself little remained, but it formed a salient in the German front line and was protected by very strong and well built defences that had already resisted a full dress attack. The enemy, thoroughly on the alert, were holding the line with picked troops and were provided with plenty of local reserves and a great mass of artillery. Shell fire was almost continuous and heavy against all approaches and communications, rendering relief, etc., difficult.

Under these conditions the attack promised to be no light task. The Battalion moved into the line on May 10th, heavy shell fire causing casualties during the relief. May 11th passed with intermittent shelling and on the night 11th/12th May the Battalion formed up for the attack under heavy shell fire.

Digitized by Google

The plan of the attack was to avoid a frontal attack but to make use of the breach already made and attempt to roll up the enemy's defences from the south. The task allotted the Battalion required an advance astride the main road running north and south through the village. At 3.40 a.m. our attack was launched. The enemy at once put down a most violent counter-bombardment, while his numerous machine guns swept all the approaches to the village. The attacking Company on the left (west of the main road) suffered so heavily from this fire that practically no progress could be made. On the right, however, the enemy's fire was less intense, and a steady advance was made, in spite of considerable casualties. By 7 a.m. the right Company had reached and in places had passed its final objective, and positions were firmly established on the north and north-west of the village. At 9 a.m. an attempt by the Reserve Company to improve our position on the left met with no success. At 12 noon three Companies of the 22nd Manchester Regiment arrived with the object of launching an attack on the left of the road, but by this time the enemy's bombardment and machine gun fire had become so fierce that it was impossible even to deploy them. During the night 12th/13th the captured positions were strengthened and some heavy bombing attacks by the enemy against our front line post north of the village were successfully driven off by the garrison splendidly led by 2nd Lieut. T. N. Woof. On the 13th the enemy kept up a heavy bombardment, while further fighting took place for the uncaptured portion of the village. During the night 13th/14th an attempt was made to relieve the Battalion, but the relieving unit was held up by a heavy enemy barrage and the relief had to be postponed. The 14th passed in a very similar manner to the 13th, confused fighting and heavy bombardments taking place throughout the day. On May 14th/15th the Battalion was eventually relieved. Our troubles were not over however, while we were leaving the line the enemy commenced a strong counter-attack and in conjunction with it put down a very heavy gas bombardment on the back areas. This had to be passed through before we could get back to comfort and safety, but as a matter of fact very few additional casualties were suffered.

Attack on Bullecourt.

As a result of this attack, the whole of the village, except that small portion, "The Red Patch," which lay west of the road, had been cleared. The enemy had been kept constantly fighting for three days, and considerable Reserves had been drawn to the spot. This was the primary object of the whole operation, as the great attack on Messines was already in active preparation and it was necessary to keep the enemy Reserves away from Flanders.

Digitized by Google

Some quite remarkable work was done by the posts established on the north and north-west of the village on the first day and commanded by 2nd Lieuts. T. N. Woof and R. H. Livingstone. These posts were only about 40 yards from the enemy, and, although inferior in position and numbers, throughout three days and nights keep up a most aggressive attitude, harrying the enemy with rifle, Lewis guns and bombs. The fighting here never ceased and sleep was impossible, but our men, in spite of casualties from enemy snipers, maintained an undoubted superiority and inflicted very heavy losses on the enemy.(1)

On the 15th May the Battalion moved back to camp at Achiet le Petit. On the 17th the General Officer Commanding 7th Division inspected us and made a most complimentary speech on the subject of the Battalion's doings in the Bullecourt fighting. The following letter from Brig.-General H. Cumming, D.S.O.,(2) on the same subject, may here be quoted:—

"Personally I never want to command better men than yours. I would trust them anywhere and in any circumstances. I hope you let your Officers and men know how proud I was of them and never more so than on the last occasion at Bullecourt. The best of luck to you and your merry men who have served me so well."

Training and Sports.

Quiet life in camp continued, some useful training, musketry and sports being carried out. Our stay here was however marred by a most unfortunate accident. On May 21st, when Lieut. C. E. Philcox was instructing a class in bombing, a defective bomb exploded in his hand and the injuries received proved fatal. Lieut. Philcox was a particularly capable Officer, popular with all ranks, who had done exceptionally good work both at Munich Trench and the capture of Bullecourt. Only a few days after his death notification was received that he had been awarded the Military Cross for gallantry in action.

On May 29th we moved to Courcelles. Training and various sports were continued. On June 5th the final for the

(1) The casualties suffered by the Battalion in this operation were:— Killed, 2 Officers, 37 other ranks; wounded, 7 Officers, 107 other ranks; missing, 27 other ranks. Total, 180.

The Officers killed were Lieut. A. J. Bell and 2nd Lieut. A. T. Penketh. Both met their end when leading their men to the attack with great gallantry, and in them the Battalion lost two popular and able Officers.

(2) After the attack on Bullecourt, Brig.-General Cummings' health broke down and he was obliged to take up a home appointment. His departure was much regretted in the Battalion, whose confidence and affection he had completely gained. He was succeeded by Brig.-General R. T. Pelly, D.S.O.

Digitized by Google

Brigade Inter-Company Football Competition was held and won by "A" Company. Three of our Companies were in the semi-finals, a striking demonstration of our supremacy in football in the Brigade.

On June 22nd, after one night spent at St. Leger, the Battalion took over a sector of the recently captured Hindenburg Line north of Bullecourt. This line had been badly knocked about by our artillery, and the troops holding it, worn out by heavy fighting, had had no proper opportunity of putting things right. The enemy were still holding the support line, about 150 yards away, so that their snipers were getting many opportunities of causing casualties, our trenches in some places being blown in and in others too shallow to shield more than a man's legs. **Trench Warfare.**

Under these conditions we took over the line. Companies at the time were weak and the sector was a big one. However, as a result of unceasing and well directed work, when we were relieved we were able to hand over the sector in quite passable condition. It was possible to move along the front line by day in perfect safety and the defences had been greatly strengthened. This achievement was really a remarkable one on the part of both Officers and men.

On the 27th June we moved back to the railway embankment just south of Croisilles, from where working parties were found daily for the front and support lines. After six days here, quiet, except for some heavy shelling of Battalion Headquarters at the railway embankment, we took over the same sector as before in the front line (July 3rd).

The line had now greatly improved, but much remained to be done, and the Battalion again put in plenty of good solid work. When we were relieved on July 9th the trench system was in a thoroughly sound defensive state and reasonably comfortable for the occupants.

Patricia Camp, to where the Battalion now proceeded, consisted of tents and bivouacs, situated between St. Leger and Ervillers. The weather being fine, life there was pleasant enough, but large working parties had to be found daily for the forward area.

On July 14th, although not in the line, we carried out a raid from our old sector. Unfortunately, owing to several postponements and difficulty in cutting the wire, the enemy had been put well on the alert, and as soon as our barrage opened his trench mortars and machine guns replied. At this period, owing to the battles in Flanders, our artillery in other sectors had been greatly thinned out and our bombardment proved quite insufficient to keep down the enemy's fire and **Raid on German Trench.**

Digitized by Google

give the raiding party a fair chance. Nevertheless, the 2 Officers and 40 other ranks pressed forward with great determination under heavy fire, and a stiff fight ensued. Eventually 2nd Lieut. T. N. Woof and Pte. Balding forced their way into the enemy front line but were not able to maintain themselves there as the enemy were in strength and full of fight. The raiding party were not able to make any further headway and returned to our trenches.(1)

For his marked gallantry on this raid 2nd Lieut. T. N. Woof was awarded a bar to his Military Cross, while the following were awarded the Military Medal:—Sergts. T. Lockett and S. Robinson, Private W. L. Balding.

On the 15th July the Battalion returned to the line, taking over the same sector as previously held. After a quiet and uneventful tour Patricia Camp was again taken over on July 23rd.

Trench Warfare.

Our movements continued regularly and rather monotonously for the next few weeks, the same sector of line (now improved out of recognition and a "Show sector") being taken over on the 31st July. This tour was marked by one incident.

A German Raid.

On the night 5th/6th August a party of Stormstruppen, under an Officer, attempted to raid our trenches. Our patrols were, as usual, very active, and before they got to our wire the defence was on the alert. Their leader was shot down by C.S.M. G. Gardner just in front of our own wire and the rest were chased back to their own trench in disorder. Their badly wounded Officer was brought in triumph to Battalion Headquarters. For this success and for fine patrol work C.S.M. S. Jackson was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal and Sergts. V. Caine and J. Eades the Military Medal.

The Battalion returned to Patricia Camp on August 7th and after two nights there marched to Berles-aux-Bois for rest and training. Berles-aux-Bois was a pleasant little village some miles south of Arras. Formerly close to the front line, the operations of the Spring had freed it from the immediate terrors of war and there were already a good number of inhabitants back in it. A start was being made to bring the surrounding country back to cultivation. Nevertheless there was plenty of good training ground available

Sports.

and some strenuous work was carried out. A pleasant interlude was afforded by the Divisional Race Meeting and Fair, an excellently organised and quite elaborate show. It was a day of triumph for the Battalion, as the Shoubridge Cup, presented by the Divisional Commander for the unit obtaining

(1) The casualties suffered were :—3 other ranks killed and 1 Officer and 16 other ranks wounded.

Digitized by Google

the most points on all events, was won after a close struggle. Points were gained by Lieut. G. S. Bailey, who won the jumping on "Lonsdale" (the Commanding Officer's charger), by C.S.M. Rollinson, who got a second in the Quarter Mile, by the Relay Team, who got third, and by myself,[1] who won two horse races, the Bullecourt Flat Race and the Longatte Hurdle Race. As there was a well patronised Totalisator on the horse races the day was lucrative as well as enjoyable for many of the Battalion.

On August 28th we moved to Mondicourt and on the following day entrained for Flanders, where the great battle for the Paschendaele Ridge was already in full swing.

We detrained at Hopoutre, near Poperinghe, in the early morning of August 30th and proceeded to Micmas Camp, near Ouderdom, an uninteresting and unlovely locality, chiefly remarkable for a plague of flies. On September 1st orders were received for a move to back areas. This was somewhat of an anti-climax. After our hurried move to Flanders it was confidently expected that we were destined to take part in a big attack at the beginning of September. This was undoubtedly the intention of the High Command at the time, but some execrable weather at the end of August, and other factors, led to a postponement, so it was decided to give the Reserve Divisions an opportunity of further training.

More Training.

After two nights at Steenvoorde (September 1st and 2nd) the Battalion moved to Les Trois Rois area, near Cassell. As the training areas were fully occupied at this time, we were kept here until September 13th. A move to Coin Perdu followed, and thence to billets at Zudausques on September 15th. This move placed us well in the training area, a fine open downland country, with pretty villages nestling in the valleys. A strenuous fortnight's training followed, several Divisional attack practices being carried out under the personal supervision of Major-General Shoubridge, the Divisional Commander. He had a genius for making such work interesting and instructive, and the lessons learnt on these days were of incalculable value when it came to the real thing in the following month. The enemy's adoption of the "pillbox" defensive system had caused us to completely revolutionise our methods of attack, and these could only be learnt by the most careful training.

On September 28th we started our move towards the line, billeting at Remilly-Wiquin. The following day took us to Arques, where we entrained. We arrived at Hubertshoek on September 30th and went into camp near there.

---

(1) Lieut.-Colonel A. B. Beauman, D.S.O.

Digitized by Google

Camp Bombed by Aeroplanes.

On September 30th, about 10 p.m., we were badly bombed by aeroplanes, 3 being killed and 26 wounded. Two of these casualties were especially serious for the Battalion. C.S.M. A. Flowers, who was killed, had come out with the Battalion in 1914 and served with it until this day. As Transport Sergeant, Company Quartermaster Sergeant and finally as Company Sergeant Major he had done conspicuously good work, and had proved himself a fighting leader of the first rank. C.S.M. Gardner, who was badly wounded on this occasion, had seen much fighting with the Battalion, had greatly distinguished himself on many occasions, and was trusted and respected by both Officers and men. Happily he eventually recovered from this wound, though it caused his retirement from the Army.

Thus, on the eve of a big battle, the Battalion lost two of its most experienced Warrant Officers.

During the last days of September and on the 1st of October thorough reconnaissances of the front line, with which we were concerned, had been carried out by the senior Officers of the Battalion. Such visits, entailing a passage of such notorious localities as Inverness Copse and Polygon Wood, were by no means unexciting, the enemy having concentrated an enormous weight of artillery against this front which he used freely day and night for harrying our communications. On the 1st of October a party, consisting of the four Company Commanders, the Adjutant (Captain A. W. Lee, M.C.), and myself, had a particularly rough passage. At dawn on that day the enemy had delivered a very strong counter-attack against our front in Polygon Wood, and fighting continued throughout the day. He kept up heavy and promiscuous artillery fire on the approaches through which we had to thread our way, our destination being the Butte in Polygon Wood, an excellent vantage point for viewing our front. However the reconnaissance was successfully carried through, though Captain F. A. Kendrick, M.C., was slightly wounded and Captain A. W. Lee had his clothing torn with shell splinters.

The Great Battles of October, 1917.

On October 1st the Battalion had moved to camp near Chateau Segard. On October 2nd we moved up to take over the line. After a halt near Zillebeke for teas, we passed Hooge Crater at dusk, and after following the Menin Road for a short distance, struck across Inverness Copse by a duckboard track. The situation was then reasonably quiet for this part of the world and everything pointed to a smooth relief. However, as the Battalion was passing through Inverness Copse, the enemy, for some unknown cause, put down the full fury of his barrage. For those who have been through such an experience this requires no description, while for those who

Digitized by Google

have not, any description would fail to give any adequate impression of the reality. Suffice it to say that amongst those who went through it were many war worn veterans, but not one of them had ever before seen shell fire of such intensity. Further progress for the time was impossible and everyone took up such cover as they could in shell holes. After about 45 minutes the tornado died down as quickly as it had blazed up, but in this short time it had caused us over 80 casualties. The men were quickly got together again by the two senior Officers with the Battalion, Captains R. W. English-Murphy and L. L. Hassell. (Battalion Headquarters had gone forward to facilitate the relief and during the barrage found welcome shelter in a pillbox which successfully resisted several direct hits.) The relief was then carried on with as methodically as if nothing untoward had happened.

Heavy German Barrage.

The sector taken over ran just east of Polygon Wood, with Battalion Headquarters at the Butte.(1) The object of our attack was a level stretch of country consisting mostly of shell holes and pillboxes and quite devoid of landmarks. At the east of this wilderness lay the derelict village of Becelaere, though this was well outside the scope of our attack. The importance of this ground lay in the fact that its acquisition was necessary to protect the right flank of the Australians, who were to attack the Brodseinde position. Possession of the latter would give them observation over large tracts of the enemy's back areas, including many of his most important artillery positions.

October 3rd passed quietly, the enemy's artillery devoting most of its attention to positions well behind the front line. The forming up was successfully carried out during the night 3rd/4th, in spite of some outbursts of hostile artillery. At 6 a.m., October 4th, our barrage blazed out on a 20 miles' front, and the waves of infantry closely followed it as it crept forward.

It is difficult to describe in detail an attack that advances successfully over a tract of country devoid of landmarks or descriptive points. The terrific power of our barrage reduced the enemy resistance to feebleness, although his lines were very strongly held, as he had a large mass of troops drawn up ready to attack when our bombardment opened, anticipating his by a few minutes. The advance continued steadily and relentlessly. Pillbox after pillbox fell to determined attacks, large numbers of the enemy were bayoneted or

Attack on Polygon Wood.

(1) A remarkable artificial mound about 80ft. high. For what purpose it was built is uncertain to the writer. One tale puts it down as a grand stand for the Polygon Wood Racecourse; another that it was built for teaching Belgian cavalry hill climbing.

Digitized by Google

captured. Only on the right was any serious resistance met with, and here some obstinate machine guns caused trouble and casualties. Our final objective, a locality known as Jolting Houses, was reached to time. Direction had been carefully kept and we occupied the exact line allotted to us. This was a considerable achievement considering the semi-darkness and complete absence of landmarks and it reflected great credit on the leading of the Company Officers and the steadiness and good discipline of the men. We achieved an advance of 900 yards on a front of 450 yards.

After a short pause another Battalion leap-frogged through us to the capture of the final objective and the work of consolidation in depth was energetically taken in hand. About 1 p.m. the enemy commenced a heavy bombardment of our positions, which he continued with varying intensity until dusk. Nevertheless the work of digging-in continued satisfactorily under the direction of Captain L. L. Hassell, M.C., the senior Officer with the front line, and by dusk we were firmly established.

Critical Position.

Nevertheless the situation was now somewhat critical. Although the attack on our front had gained the final objective, the situation on our right was by no means satisfactory. The Division on our right had only made moderate progress, had suffered heavy casualties, and was somewhat disorganised. The ruined village of Reutel, and other positions that menaced our right flank, were still in enemy hands, and a counter-attack from this direction might have had serious results. Energetic steps were at once taken to meet the situation. The right flank was strengthened by extra rifles and Lewis guns. A quite serviceable redoubt was rapidly constructed and a defensive flank was formed of some Companies of the Brigade Reserve. As matters turned out, the enemy, exhausted by his losses during the day, confined himself to heavy shelling throughout the night.

October 5th dawned quietly, but as the day advanced enemy shelling became more and more intense, while our positions were sniped from various points and enfiladed by machine guns from Polderhoek Ridge. This day was not a pleasant one for the Battalion in its improvised trenches, and casualties were severe. No infantry action developed however.

October 6th was a much quieter day, and on the night 6th/7th we were relieved and went into dug-outs in Zillebeke Bund, with the satisfaction of work well done. On the morning of the 7th we moved back to camp near Dickebusch.

This completely successful action cost us considerable casualties, mostly from shell fire during the relief on October

Digitized by Google

2nd and after the attack. Amongst the fallen was Captain T. D. Parkes. He had joined the Battalion in 1915 and done much useful work, first as Transport Officer and then as Adjutant. Wounded in the summer of 1916, he had rejoined the Battalion in the summer of 1917 and led his Company with conspicuous success in the advance. He was killed by a sniper on the second day, when directing the work of consolidation. A most capable young Officer, cheerful and optimistic at all times, his loss was a very real one to the Battalion.(1)

After three days near Dickebusch, another camp, near St. Hubertshoek, was taken over on October 10th. On October 12th the Battalion was marched back and went into billets near Mont des Cats. Here training was restarted, re-organisation consequent on the recent fighting was carried out and a large draft absorbed.

Our rest was not of long duration, and on October 22nd we started towards the line, once more taking up a camp near Sherzenberg, and on the following day bivouacs near Vormezeele were occupied. On October 24th we went into the line just south of Menin Road, with orders to co-operate in an attack on Gheluvelt on the 26th. The relief passed quietly, but on the 25th Captain W. H. Curry, D.S.O., was killed by a sniper. This Officer had served with the Battalion continuously for over a year and had proved himself a particularly fine fighting leader. He was loved and trusted by his Company and by his brother Officers. His death was a very serious loss to the Battalion.

Attack on Gheluvelt.

The forming up was successfully carried out under intermittent shell fire and at dawn the attack was launched. Our objective was a muddy shell stricken ridge south of Menin, plentifully sprinkled with pillboxes of the strongest pattern.

As soon as our advance started heavy machine gun fire opened from the enemy lines, but artillery fire was of only medium severity.

The left hand Company made progress in spite of heavy casualties from machine gun fire until within about 50 yards of the pillbox defences known as Berry Cotts. Here very fierce opposition was met with, stick bombs being freely used by the enemy and the attack was swept by machine gun fire. The mud had by now made most of the rifles and Lewis guns

(1) Two other highly promising Officers, 2nd Lieuts. C. Teague and M. H. Phillips, fell in these operations, the latter being sniped when carrying out an important reconnaissance. Seven Officers were wounded. In addition, the Battalion lost 36 killed, 223 wounded, 49 missing, giving a total of 318.

Digitized by Google

useless, and the strength of the Company was reduced to 1 Officer and 20 men. Under these circumstances no further progress could be made, and the remnants of the Company lay in shell holes until an opportunity could be found of retiring to our original front line.

The centre met with very strong resistance from the concrete fort known as Hamp Farm. Their line was swept by cross machine gun fire that caused such heavy casualties that their advance was checked after gaining a bare hundred yards.

The right Company suffered less from machine gun fire than the others, being protected to a certain extent by the lie of the ground. In consequence they were able to make a determined attack on their objective, a hillock known as the Mound. This was strongly held by the enemy and heavy fighting ensued. After a prolonged and desperate struggle, during which all the Officers and senior N.C.Os. were killed or wounded, this gallant Company, now under command of a corporal, carried the position. The enemy retired, leaving many dead and a heavy machine gun behind them. The position was consolidated and messages sent back for reinforcements. Unfortunately all the runners sent back became casualties and no message reached Battalion Headquarters. Owing to their isolation and small numbers what remained of this Company were compelled to fall back at dusk.

Attack on Gheluvelt.

By noon the attack had failed all along the Divisional Front, except for some local gains of ground, and nothing remained to be done except to reorganise on our old front line. At dusk the battle died down and during the night 26th/27th October we were relieved with very little interference from the enemy and went into camp near Vierstraat.

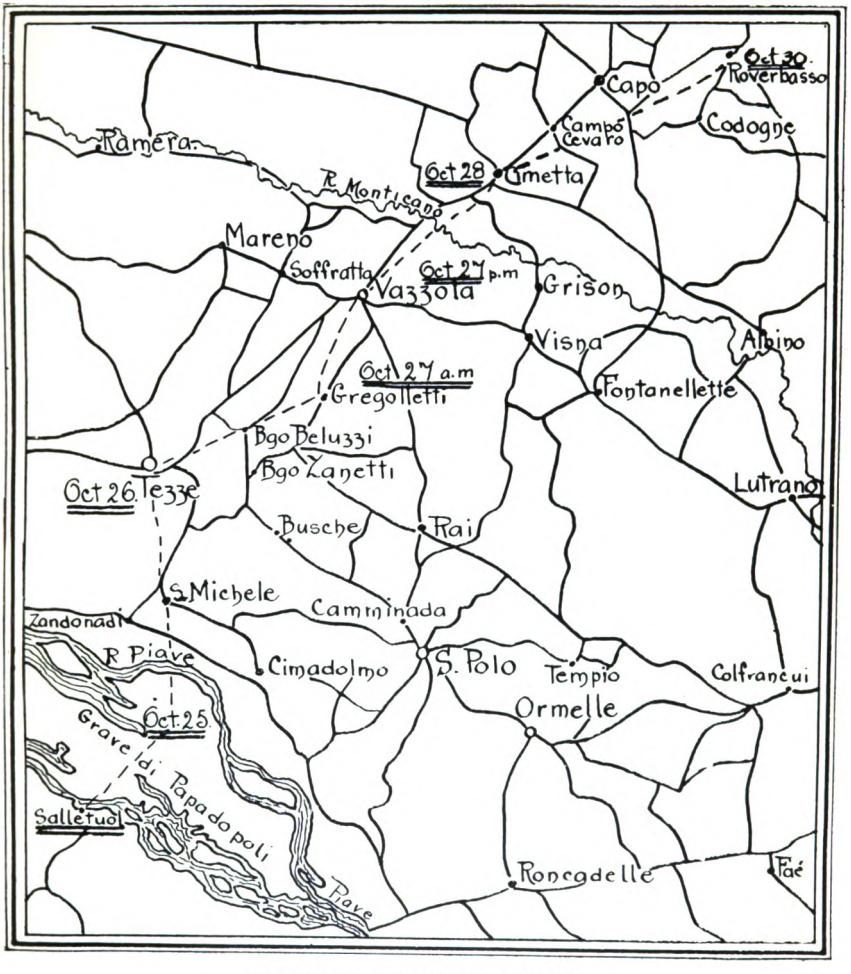
The best comment on this unfortunate day's operations is contained in a letter received shortly after from the Divisional Commander:—

"Dear Beauman.—I have just seen the Army Commander. Though he regrets that we did not get our objective as much as we do ourselves, he fully realises that Officers and men did all that was humanly possible in the face of great difficulties.

"He also told me the enemy had a railway reserve between Menin and Paschendael, intending to employ it at the most threatened point. Our attack showed such determination that he retained all reserve opposite us. This helped the Canadians materially to gain and hold their objectives. Therefore we did not fight in vain.

"The 7th Division has taken hard knocks before but it never loses its splendid spirit, and yesterday's battle will only be an incentive to get our own back on the next opportunity.

Digitized by Google



BATTLE OF THE PIAVE.
Showing 1st Battalion's Advance to Roverbasso.

MAP 2.

To face p. 208.

Digitized by Google
UNIV. OF MICH.

Digitized by Google

"Will you convey the contents of this letter to all Officers, N.C.Os. and men, and also tell them how proud I am of the way in which they went forward under the worst conditions of mud and fire, and would not give in until they died or stuck in the mud. No soldiers can do more.

Yours sincerely,
HERBERT SHOUBRIDGE."

Our losses in this action were severe, the proportion of killed and missing being very high. Reference has already been made to Captain W. H. Curry, D.S.O. 2nd Lieut. G. A. C. Sheffield, the Battalion Intelligence Officer, fell when establishing an advance report centre close behind the attack. Extremely capable, hardworking and popular, this Officer had done most valuable work for the Battalion for a long period. A few days after his gallant end he was awarded the M.C. for his fine work on October 4th. Another Officer who died a particularly noble death was 2nd Lieut. R. S. Pullen. He fell when leading the dashing attack of the right Company, and his personal example was largely responsible for their success. Other gallant and capable Officers who died at the head of their men on this day were 2nd Lieuts. P. S. Glaze, W. H. Nokes and H. E. Poulton.(1) 2nd Lieut. V. Hield was badly wounded and taken prisoner, while 2nd Lieut. S. H. Houle was wounded. Amongst the missing was C.S.M. Stephen Jackson, M.M., D.C.M., a splendid type of Warrant Officer, a born leader in battle and a fine footballer.

Resting and Re-organisation.

On October 29th, after a train journey to Ebblighem, we went into excellent billets at Lynde, not far from Aire. The next few days were spent in well earned rest, cleaning up and re-organisation. Large reinforcements of Officers and men were received. On November 9th the Division was reviewed by the King of the Belgians, and, in spite of the large number of new men in the ranks, the parade was marked by great smartness and precision of movement.

On November 10th we moved by motor bus to Becourt, where two nights were spent. On November 13th we marched to Wismes and thence to Verchocq (November 14th) and Hesdin (November 15th). On November 18th we entrained at Anvin for the long journey to Italy. After over three years

(1) Exclusive of Officers, 38 were killed, 136 wounded and 91 missing, giving a total of 265.

Another Officer of the Battalion fell on this day, Lieut. W. C. Conley, M.C. As he was attached to a Light Trench Mortar Battery, he was technically off our strength, but we counted him as one of ourselves and deplored the death of a gallant and genial Officer. He was actually supporting the attack of the Battalion with his mortars when he fell.

Digitized by Google

of strenuous work in France we were destined for another theatre of war.

38th Move to Italy.

The situation in Italy at this time was critical in the extreme. After the disaster at Caporetto in October, the Italians had been driven from one position to another, and no one could foresee where the retreat would end. British and French troops were being poured over the Alps to help to retrieve the situation. We were destined to form part of this force.

The journey took from November 18th to 25th. Although rather slow it was thoroughly enjoyable and we received a most effusive welcome after crossing the Italian border. Travelling by Paris, Lyons, Marseilles, Toulon, Nice, we crossed the frontier at Ventimiglia and thence *via* Genoa and Mantua to Legnano (November 25th).

Detraining here in the middle of the night, we had a long and wearisome march to Roveredo. A cold damp mist did not present Italy at its best. After a day of rest and cleaning up we moved to Campiglia. The weather had now cleared and we marched under a blue sky and bright sun, with the snow covered Alps rising splendidly from the plains to the northward. November 29th took us to Nanto, a picturesque and comfortable hill village south of Vicenza. After two nights here a long march brought us to Piazzola on the Brenta. At this village the Battalion occupied a place of vast dimensions and great magnificence. As the nights were now bitterly cold, and the heating apparatus was not working, we would willingly have exchanged into something less regal and rather warmer. We were again only allowed two nights' rest, and for the next few days we were kept constantly on the move; San Michele (December 2nd), Piombino (December 3rd), Alberedo (December 4th), being the stages. On December 5th we took up billets at Pazzan di Campagna, where we were at length allowed some rest. The situation on the Piave was now more or less stable, and the presence of more British Divisions in the front line was not immediately required.

The next few days were spent quietly, and on December 11th we moved north-westwards to Altivole. Here we settled down in comfortable billets and some useful training was started.

On December 21st we were suddenly moved to Crespagno at the foot of the Alps. Some enemy successes in the mountains had jeopardized the Italian positions on Mount Grappa and astride the Brenta Gorge. We immediately set to work to dig a strong line facing north in the foothills to cover a possible retreat from the mountain positions.

Digitized by Google

We worked hard for the next few days, and unfortunately did not finish until midday on Christmas Day, returning to Altivole in the afternoon. We had our Christmas dinners on the 26th, and, thanks to the efforts of the Acting Quartermaster, R.Q.M.S. A. Riley, and of C.Q.M.S. Hiam, they were a very great success, sufficient turkeys for the whole Battalion having been obtained. A cloudless sky and a warm sun marked the day and enabled some Companies to have their dinners in the open. Very different surroundings from the muddy camp at Bertrancourt, where the 1916 Christmas had been spent! In the afternoon the Officers signally defeated the Sergeants at football.

Christmas at Altivole, Italy.

On the 29th December a most successful Regimental Musketry Meeting was held, the open competition receiving large entries from the whole Division. On the 30th we returned to the foothills for further work on the defensive line, being billeted at Castelcucco.

Digitized by Google

THE RECORD OF THE 1ST BATTALION, 1918.

On the Montello, Italy—Raids on the Austrian Line—Training at Villafranca—On the Asiago Plateau—Raid at Vaister—Summer at Mount Serona Camp—The Piave River—The Crossing at Grave di Papadopoli—Capture of Villages—Capture of Borgo Belussi and Vazzola—Crossing the Monticano—Capture of Cimetta—Further Advance to Rauscedo—The Armistice, November 11th, 1918—Home Again, 1919—On Foreign Service, Burmah.

THE first week of January, 1918, the 1st Battalion spent in preparing a strong support line in rear of the Italian position on Mount Grappa, then going back to billets at Altivole, where, on the 9th January, they defeated the 22nd Manchesters by 7—0 in the first round of the Divisional Football Cup.

On the Montello.

On the 16th January the Battalion moved to Cusignana, the Division having been ordered to take over the line on the Montello. This is a curious flat topped hill, lying on the right bank of the Piave. It is covered by vines, small woods, scattered farmhouses and intersected by numerous roads. Just to the north of it the Piave enters the dominating escarpment of the Alps, while to the south the vine covered Venetian Plain stretches in unbroken flatness to the Adriatic. With the Piave, a deep and swift river of many channels, forming No Man's Land, the chances of a surprise attack were reduced to a minimum, and although occasionally both artilleries were active, taken as a whole it was a veritable haven of rest after the muddy and restless trench lines in France and Flanders.

From the 17th to the 24th January the Battalion was bivouaced in support. Much useful constructive work and cleaning up was done.

On January 24th a sector of the front line was taken over on the southern portion of the Montello, opposite Falze di Piave. Here the right bank of the river formed a precipitous cliff, the top of which formed a splendid line of defence. By night posts were established in the river bed to prevent surprise.

Some very determined efforts were now made to get patrols over the river by night and harry the enemy. Great difficulties existed however. The main stream was so deep and swift that a man of average physique was liable to be swept off his

Digitized by Google

feet and drowned; the water coming from the snow covered mountains was icy cold; the river bed was broad and almost devoid of cover, the white shingle making any movement painfully conspicuous. Nevertheless several crossings were effected by small bodies and valuable information was obtained as to the enemy's movements and dispositions. For this good work C.S.M. Lockett was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal and Private T. Scrimgeour the Military Medal.

On the night 2nd/3rd February the Battalion handed over the line, vastly improved both as regards defences and dispositions, and returned to billets at Cusignana. Here some training was carried on, though large working parties had to be found daily for the forward area. On the 6th February the 2nd Queen's were defeated 6—0 in the second round of the Divisional Football Cup.

On the 10th February the Battalion returned to the Montello and went into support where some considerable shelling took place, though little damage was done. During this period all the more senior Officers being absent from various causes, Captain A. W. Lee, M.C., commanded the Battalion.

On the 18th February the front line was taken over on the southern portion of the Montello, the right almost reaching Nervesa. Every night determined efforts were made to cross the river, but without much success, the stream being very violent here and the moon very bright.

On the 27th February the Battalion was withdrawn to billets at Cusignana, and on the 28th marched to Pezzan di Campagna. The march continued westward during the next two days, Albaredo being occupied on March 1st and S. Martino on the 2nd.

From here we expected to entrain for France, but the move was cancelled at the last moment. On March 7th we moved to Loreggia and the march was continued to Villafranca on the 8th.

Sports at Villafranca.

The period 8th to 24th March was spent at Villafranca, some useful training being put in. The Battalion continued its victorious career in the Divisional Football Cup. On the 12th the 21st Manchesters were defeated 17—2, and on the 16th Brigade Headquarters lost to us by 6—2. The semi-final was played at Montegalda on the 18th, a really desperate game against the 24th Manchesters being won by 2—1. The final, played at Montegalda on the 23rd, resulted in a fairly easy win over the 2nd Gordons by 5—2. The cup, a magnificent trophy, was personally presented by the Divisional Commander, Major-General T. H. Shoubridge, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.

Digitized by Google

On the 23rd March we started a move northward and marched to Lanze. On the 27th Villaverla was occupied and on the following night we billeted at Thiene. On the morning of the 29th the whole Battalion was put into motor 'buses and proceeded by the marvellous mountain road to the Asiago Plateau.

The country of the plateau was quite unlike any battle ground we had experienced before. A country of fir forests, steep, rocky hills, a strip of open hilly country and then rugged snow capped mountains as far as the eye could see. It was indeed a change from the open downlands of France or the dreary flats of Flanders. A night was spent at Carriola Camp, in a cold and uncomfortable collection of huts. On the 30th March, after a scrambling march on the icebound roads, we took over the front line in the neighbourhood of Mount Lemerle. Our line here ran through the edges of the fir forest. In front of us the forest ended abruptly and open country lay between us and the Austrian trenches 2,000 yards away.

On the Asiago Plateau.

Our front line was strong and well constructed, thickly wired and well supplied with dug-outs. During this tour we completely re-organised the system of holding the line, pushing forward outposts to the open ground beyond the forest. Our patrols made nightly excursions right up to the enemy wire, which was reported strong. The enemy was on the whole inactive, though his artillery showed spasmodic bursts of activity.

On the 7th April we were relieved and proceeded to a hut camp at Casa Magnaboschi, near the village of Cessuna. Life here was somewhat uninteresting, movement from the camp being restricted by enemy observation.

On April 15th we went into the line south of Carriola—Canove Road and on the night of the 17th/18th we carried out a most successful raid on the enemy outposts at Vaister, a ruined farmhouse about half-way between the enemy lines. Patrols had established the fact that this locality was strongly held by the enemy nightly. Owing to its isolated position, and the absence of wire defences, it appeared to form an easy prey, although a previous attempt against it had failed.

Raid at Vaister.

A sunken road led out from our line to the house, and the raiding party of 7 Officers and 150 other ranks formed up astride this, Captain Kendrick being in charge to the right of the road and Lieut. Cuxson to the left. The flanks were thrown well forward so that the advance was made in half moon formation. In spite of a bright moon, the raiding party managed to work within 200 yards of their objective without being observed. At 11 p.m. our howitzers put down a crash

Digitized by Google

on Vaister House and our men dashed forward. The two flanks, sweeping round the house, met in rear of it, and the garrison, completely surrounded, were overcome after a sharp fight. Over 20 prisoners fell into our hands and 16 of the enemy were bayonetted. Our casualties were five wounded.

This brilliant little affair was by far the most successful raid that had so far taken place on the plateau and attracted much attention.

On the 20th the Battalion was relieved and proceeded to camp at Mount Serona overlooking the plains. On the 21st we scrambled rather than marched downhill by a mule track and went into billets at S. Dona, a rather squalid village at the bottom of the mountains.

A week was spent here. Captain Hassell, D.S.O., M.C., rejoined the battalion on the 25th from the Senior Officers' School at Aldershot, and took up the duties of Second-in-Command, Major Twiss having just previously left for France on promotion to command a Battalion.

Mount Serona Camp.

On April 28th we toiled up the mountains to Mount Serona Camp, a long and stiff climb. After some days here, during which large working parties were found daily, we moved up into support at Mount Lemerle (May 6th). While we were here the welcome news was received that the Battalion had won Lord Cavan's Boxing Cup, open to the whole of the Italian Expeditionary Force. The team consisted of Private Griffiths (winner of the feather weights), Lce.-Cpl. Smith, Private Lemnon and Lce.-Cpl. Ballinger, all of whom won points for the Battalion. The team had been most carefully trained by R.Q.M.S. Riley, to whom much of the credit of our success was due.

Life otherwise was uneventful enough, and after 10 days at Mount Lemerle we returned to Mount Serona Camp (May 17th). On the following day we descended to the plains and went into camp at Centrale, a village in the foothills.

The Italian summer had now set in on the plains and conditions were almost tropical. Strenuous training was carried out in the early mornings and no less strenuous sports in the evenings. On the 25th May the Battalion won the Brigade Boxing Cup after an unexpectedly close tussle with the 22nd Manchesters.

On May 26th Lieut.-Colonel A. B. Beauman, D.S.O., was called away at short notice to take over command of the 69th Infantry Brigade, and on July 5th the command of the 1st Battalion was handed over to Major W. R. English-Murphy, M.C.

Digitized by Google

Before vacating the Command, Colonel Beauman issued the following farewell address:—

"To the Officers, W.O.'s, N.C.O.'s and men of the 1st South Staffs. Regiment.

"I was called away so suddenly that I was unable to come round and say goodbye to you as I should have liked to have done. I commanded the 38th continuously for 19 months, and I can honestly say this period has been the happiest in my life. No C.O. could command a more magnificent body of men, loyal, cheerful, hardworking, keen and splendid fighters. During my command the Battalion has won many splendid successes in battle—this has been due to the splendid leading of your Company Officers and the magnificent fighting spirit of the whole Battalion. Our losses have been considerable, but success can rarely be won cheaply in this war and our battle record is second to none. The discipline shown by all ranks during my command has been most satisfactory. See that it continues so, for discipline is the life blood of a Battalion.

"I am also pleased to think that during my command you have been a happy Battalion. I have always been met with cheerful smiling faces.

"Well, you must all know how my heart and thoughts are bound up with the dear old 38th. Wherever I go and whatever lies in store for me you will never be out of my thoughts. Remember that I look on each one of you as a friend and shall always be glad to hear from you or see you. May you go on from success to success, from victory to victory and God bless every one of you.

(Signed) A. B. BEAUMAN, Brig.-General."

During the critical days of the great German offensive subsequent to March 21st, 1918, the eyes of the British troops in Italy turned to France, and rumour became general that the 1st South Staffords would return there.

When the glorious news of the final "hold up" of the German offensive and the success of the Allied counter-strokes reached us, a great wave of elation swept over the 7th Division, and men began to ask, when was their turn to come? Was the "Fighting Seventh" forgotten? Hopes revived when the 1st Battalion embarked on a period of strenuous training, but as the summer days passed, their hopes grew low. Yet fate had very glorious days in store for them.

Since the 1st Battalion's arrival in Italy, no opportunity of measuring swords with the Austrians on a large scale had presented itself. While on the Asiago Plateau, raiding had

Digitized by Google

become a favourite pastime, and the enemy had been given no rest.

The 1st Battalion carried out a successful raid on the Austrian lines at Canove on the night of August 8th/9th. Canove is a large village on the Asiago, about a kilometre in front of the Val d'Assa, a deep and rugged defile. It formed a very strong position with heavy belts of wire in front. The enemy were on the *qui vive*, as it had already been raided on several occasions. The idea of the raid was to seize Canove, advance to the Val d'Assa, and break up parties of the enemy who lived in dug-outs there. **Raid on Canove**

The Battalion on its advance at zero (12 midnight) was met with very heavy machine gun fire, but forced its way into the village, where many of the enemy were shot in the streets. The very heavy fire rendered the second part of the task impossible and prevented the raiding party deploying from the village, so having thoroughly cleared and searched Canove they withdrew, taking with them 27 prisoners, including two Officers. The enemy's fire was continuous until 2 a.m., and all ranks displayed great determination under the heavy fire.(1)

In two dashing raids the 1st Battalion had distinguished themselves, taking 54 prisoners,(2) but the freely expressed desire of the Officers and men, was that they should have a chance of meeting the Austrians on a larger scale. "Towards the end of September, rumours began to circulate that we were to go into the line on the Piave. For once rumour proved truthful, and towards the end of October we began to move to the neighbourhood of Treviso. Finally, about the 20th October, some Battalions of the 7th Division took over the line on the Piave, and Officers began to make themselves familiar with the new sector. Great precautions were taken to ensure that the Austrians should not become aware of the presence of British troops in this area, troops in the line donned Italian steel helmets and uniform, and Officers on reconnaissance were similarly garbed. **On the Piave.**

"Our guns moved into position, but did not register, the accuracy of the barrage in the subsequent battle spoke volumes for their skill and training in shooting from the map. One Division was actually left in the line on the Asiago Plateau, to still further mislead the enemy."(3)

---

(1) Casualties were:—2nd Lieuts. J. H. Drew, G. M. Addison, W. E. Gibbons, J. Salt, B. Hoult, and T. N. Woof, M.C., wounded (2nd Lieut. G. M. Addison died of wounds in hospital).
Other ranks.—Killed, 1; died of wounds, 3; wounded, 48; missing, 4.

(2) The raids of April 15th, at Vaister, and Canove, August 8th.

(3) Lieut.-Colonel W. R. English-Murphy, D.S.O., M.C., has very kindly permitted me to use his account of the Piave operations.

Digitized by Google

"To realise the difficulties overcome by the troops of the 7th and 23rd Divisions in crossing the Piave, a short description of the river will not be out of place. The forcing of the Piave was a feat of which the most veteran troops might be proud.

On the Piave.

"The Piave is quite unlike an English river. Emerging from the mountains north of the Montello, it winds its way through the vine-covered Venetian plains to the sea near Venice. It is really a series of deep and rapid streams separated by banks of white shingle and small islands. The bed of the stream is loose and shifting. Melting snows in the hills cause it to rise rapidly. When swollen it attains a velocity of 15 miles per hour. In width from bank to bank it varies from 500 yards to almost 3 miles. The position of the main current changes from time to time, sometimes close to the right bank, at other times following the left. Luck, however, favoured us in that during this period the main stream flowed on our bank. The point chosen for the crossing of the 7th Division was opposite a small ruined village, Maserada by name. Here the river was about 2½ miles across, but broken into numerous streams by a series of islands. The principal of these was a large island called the Grave di Papadopoli of about 7 acres in extent. The streams to be crossed numbered about six in all, of which the principal one ran between the island of Grave di Papadopoli and our bank. Another stream, about 3 feet deep and extremely rapid, ran under the enemy's bank. A third stream, fairly deep, but not so fast as the former, flowed on the enemy's side of the Grave island.

"These streams varied in width, the principal one being about 400 yards across, the remaining about 50 to 100 yards. The scheme of the attack was simple. The enemy held the Grave di Papadopoli, and had built there a trench system well wired and garrisoned. In a preliminary operation this island was to be cleared, and form a jumping off spot for the main attack on the enemy's positions. The 23rd Division was to advance on the left, the 7th Division in the centre, Italian troops were to prolong the right.

"On the night of the 23rd/24th October, the 1st Royal Welsh Fusiliers and the 2nd H.A.C. crossed in boats and despite opposition gained a footing on the island. The operation was one demanding the greatest secrecy and skill. In little boats manned by Italian boatmen and containing only six men, the attackers were ferried across. The extreme rapidity of the current which spun the boats round like tops, the darkness of the night, the unknown landing ground, and all the attendant difficulties of deployment, made the operation a very difficult one. However all were overcome, and the attack was a

Digitized by Google

brilliant success. During the following days the gains were extended despite a heavy counter-attack and constant shelling.

"On the 7th Divisional front everything was now in readiness for the main effort. The 91st Brigade were to break the enemy's line. Of this Brigade the 22nd Manchester Regiment formed the front line—the 1st Battalion South Staffs. Regiment were in support—the 2nd Queen's (Royal West Surreys) in Reserve. On the evening of the 23rd October the 1st South Staffs. Regiment moved billets at Borgo di Fontaine to the concentration area at Calle Maggiore.

"This area was totally devoid of habitation—bivouacs were set up under cover of the vines, and a hot meal served before the men turned in for the night. Next day, at dawn, the bivouacs were struck lest hostile aircraft should detect them. Unfortunately it began to rain heavily, and conditions were very uncomfortable. Battalion Headquarters, in a leaky cowshed, were no better off than the men. To make matters worse the Piave rose several inches. Next day, the 25th, however, proved a gloriously summer day, and was devoted to drying the men's clothes sodden by the heavy rain.

"The river, however, remained swollen. The 26th proved to be a day of heavy fog and intermittent showers. Taking advantage of the fog the Royal Engineers rapidly flung a pontoon bridge across the river to the Grave Island. Sufficient praise cannot be given them for this splendid achievement. The swollen and rapid river made it an extremely difficult task. Had the bridge not been constructed the attacking Battalions would have had to cross in small boats, and in the state of the river this would have proved a hazardous and lengthy proceeding. At last, on the evening of the 26th October, orders to cross to Grave Island were received. Never were orders more gladly obeyed. Everyone was glad of any excuse for action, the previous days' waiting proving very irksome—the more especially as all movement by day was rigidly restricted owing to hostile aircraft.

Crossing to Grave di Papadopoli.

"About 7 p.m. on the evening of the 26th October the Battalion paraded. Darkness had set in and a drizzling rain was falling. About 7.30 p.m. we began our march to the assembly position. Tracks and roads were avoided, and a route taped and marked out by the 24th Manchesters (Divisional Pioneers) was followed. The old front line along the bank of the Piave was reached about 10 p.m. Thence the Battalion in parties of 50 crossed the pontoon bridge. Many hearty blessings were bestowed on the Royal Engineers, when the roaring and rapid torrent that rushed by the pontoon was seen. The crossing was affected without mishap, Austrian searchlights occasionally swept the sky, but screened by the

Digitized by Google

island could not reach the bridge. Very wild and desolate, with its stunted trees and scrubby brush, intersected here and there by the dry beds of streams, did the island appear. The absence of landmarks made the forming up difficult. With the help of Lieut. H. D. Thompson, M.C. (the Battalion Intelligence Officer), who had crossed some time previous, and the aid of our compasses, this was completed by 11.15 p.m., save for 'A' Company, under Captain F. A. Kendrick, M.C., who disappeared in the scrub and darkness, and could not be located for a considerable time.

"A dreary rain began to fall, accompanied by a sharp wind. The men busied themselves digging in—for shelter against shell fire there was none. Battalion Headquarters proceeded to make itself a home in a shallow shell hole, which, under the direction of Lance-Corpl. Hobin and its batmen, soon afforded a moderate amount of protection. At 11.30 p.m. our preliminary bombardment burst forth. The enemy was not long in replying, and soon shrapnel and high explosives were bursting over our assembly positions. The men, however, had dug in to some effect, and the results of the night shelling were only two men wounded. The night now became very dark, the continuous flashing of the guns proved very dazzling, and it was with great difficulty that Officers and runners found their way about. The bitter cold and the sharp wind prevented any possibility of rest. The shallow holes dug for shelter soon became water-logged. The necessity of remaining crouched in them owing to the enemy's persistent and uncomfortably accurate shelling made the night one to be distinctly remembered for its unpleasantness. The hours dragged slowly on, and it was with a distinct feeling of relief, about 5 a.m., that we prepared to advance to the attack. The rain and wind still added to our discomforts.

The Advance to the Attack.

"At 5.15 a.m., on the morning of the 27th October, we began to move forward some 500 yards in rear of the 22nd Manchesters. Direction was solely a question of good compass work. Leaving the island, we plunged into a broad and shallow stream, and crossed to the next bank of shingle. Crashing through the stunted undergrowth, we reached a third broad stream, which we rapidly crossed. Here we came under rifle and machine gun fire, some casualties occurring. It was on the whole unaimed fire, 'overs' from that directed at the Manchesters. A short halt was made at this point to discover what was happening in front. The Manchesters had now reached the final stream—a very deep and rapid current—and had come under a machine gun and rifle fire. The enemy were manning the Bund, a broad earthen embankment, about 10 feet in height, which followed the course of the river, about 30 yards from the edge of the stream. A small party of the

Digitized by Google

Manchesters had crossed and formed a small bridgehead, but were being hard pressed. The remainder, under heavy fire, found the crossing difficult.

"In consultation between the Officers commanding the two Battalions, it was decided to rush the Staffords up on the flank and, charging together, carry the embankment. The enemy directed a heavy fire on the river, and bullets raised miniature waterspouts or ricocheted with a whine off the gravel banks. However, with a loud cheer, the South Staffords rushed forward in line, and side by side with the Manchesters dashed into the current. The force of the stream was such that many were knocked down and rolled over many times before regaining their feet. Forming chains and linking arms, the majority got safely across. Casualties were, luckily, not heavy, the speed of the rush proving its salvation. A new obstacle now presented itself in the shape of a broad belt of barbed wire. Numerous parties flung themselves upon it, and, working energetically with wire cutters and breakers, soon made several passages. Through these trooped the exultant South Staffords and Manchesters. In a few moments the entire embankment was cleared. Some machine guns and trench mortars fell into our hands. Many Austrians were killed and wounded, but the remainder made good their escape through the thick vine country in rear. A short halt was made, and the time spent in re-organising.

"At this juncture, Lieut.-Colonel G. O. Ramsbottom, D.S.O., commanding 22nd Manchester Regiment, and I[1] decided that instead of keeping the South Staffords in support, they should move on his left flank and take over half his objective—the very close vine country—the difficulty of connection—the apparent strength of the enemy making the original one Battalion frontage a task beyond his Battalion's power. This was accordingly done, and the 1st South Staffords took over the front from Vendrame (a small village) on the right, the left being astride the Zandonadi—Tezzi Road, a front of close on 700 yards. The Battalion was distributed as follows:—In the firing line, 'A' Company, under Captain F. A. Kendrick, M.C., took over the left front, and 'D' Company, under Captain F. Robinson, M.C., on the right. 'C' Company, under Captain — Cuxson, M.C., was in support, 'B' Company, under Captain H. de Trafford, M.C., being in reserve. Touch was got with the 8th Yorks, 23rd Division, on the left, and the 22nd Manchesters on the right. The advance then resumed. Vendrame, a small cluster of houses, was quickly cleared and yielded about 40 prisoners. Pushing on through the vines, the Staffords approached S. Michele di Piave, a

Capture of Vendrame.

(1) Lieut.-Colonel W. R. English-Murphy, D.S.O., M.C.

Digitized by Google

ruined village about 700 yards from the Bund. Here they were greeted with a heavy burst of machine gun fire. The men, advancing frontally on the village, were halted, and opened fire, and an encircling movement at once inaugurated. Working up through ditches and vines, a strong party reached the Graveyard, about 200 yards on the right of the village. Spreading out along a dyke by the road, they opened a heavy Lewis gun and rifle fire on the village. Scouts crawled forward and located the machine guns which were giving trouble, and immediately three Lewis guns were concentrated on them. One machine gun was silenced immediately. Under cover of the fire, 'C' Company, under Captain Cuxson, M.C., was closing up to the village. Suddenly a loud cheer was heard, and 'C' Company, in a dashing bayonet charge, swept up the village street. The houses were cleared and all opposition speedily silenced. Three machine guns and over 40 prisoners fell into our hands. A number of Austrians were killed and wounded.

Capture of S. Michele di Piave by the 38th.

"While this fighting was taking place, 'A' Company on the left was advancing rapidly, in close touch with the 8th Yorks. Owing to the resistance at S. Michele di Piave, a gap threatened to be formed between the right and left Companies. To remedy this, 'B' Company, under Captain H. de Trafford, M.C., was moved up into line, 'C' Company now becoming reserve. When the village had been thoroughly cleared, the advance was resumed. Our barrage was now very visible, a thick line of bursting shell being clearly seen just ahead. The use of smoke shell made it quite easy to follow its exact line. Here a pause was made till 9.30 a.m. to await the lift of the barrage. This time was spent in re-organising.

"We had now come up against the definite support trench system. This was well entrenched, with a strong band of wire in front. A strong point had been constructed about a small farmhouse called Casa Paollotti. The bed of a dried stream in rear provided the garrison with a secondary line of defence in the event of his being driven from the first. Our barrage falling short of this point prevented us from rushing it after the capture of S. Michele. Accordingly, the enemy had time to re-organise its defence to some effect.

"On the left of the guns, at 9.30 a.m., the Battalion again pushed forward. Almost immediately a lively fire from a considerable number of rifles was opened from this strong position. A brisk fight ensued. The Staffords, working forward along ditches, rushed the trench system, and drove the enemy into the house and adjoining trenches. Sergeant Ballinger, M.M., however, worked forward and dropped a Mills bomb into the house, and a second into the trench just behind. Following up the confusion created by the explosions,

Digitized by Google

he and his platoon gallantly rushed the house. About 15 Austrians were killed, many were severely wounded, a machine gun and a number of prisoners remained in our hands. About 60 Austrians, escaping from the house, took up a position in the dry river bed in rear. They opened a lively fire, bringing two machine guns into action. Corporal Peeke, a very gallant soldier, dashed forward with his platoon in chase, but was greeted with a withering fire, the gallant Corporal being severely wounded, together with several of his men. A frontal attack in face of the enemy's machine gun fire would have caused many casualties. Accordingly, the Staffords in the strong point opened a heavy fire, while two platoons were sent round to take the enemy in his flank.

"A deed worthy of record occurred just at this juncture. Corporal Bennett, a very fine type of N.C.O., saw his comrade, Corporal Peeke, lying in the open under heavy fire. Taking no thought for himself, he dashed from his cover, and in spite of a hail of bullets succeeded in reaching Corporal Peeke. Just then the gallant rescuer was himself wounded in the head. Despite his wound, he lifted the wounded man and carried him back to the shelter of the trench. Finding some stretcher-bearers, he refused to have his own wound dressed until his comrade had been attended to. He was subsequently awarded the D.C.M.

The Advance Continued.

"In the meantime, our Lewis guns and rifle fire had caused a slackening in the enemy's efforts. The flanking party had crept into position, and, charging through a hedge, cleared the Austrians out with their bayonets.

"The Austrians had indeed suffered heavily in the fight. At Casa Paollotti they in all lost 30 killed, a like number wounded. About 60 unwounded prisoners were taken and three machine guns captured.

"The advance swept on. 'C' and 'D' Companies, advancing, came to more open country. Casa Ancillotto, a large house with several smaller buildings, was carried, six Austrians being killed in hand-to-hand fighting. Here we found evidence of the accuracy of our guns, one dyke being strewn with Austrians killed by shell-fire. Pressing rapidly forward, these Companies reached the main road from Tezze to Borgo Zanetti, and their task was complete. On the left, 'A' Company had been equally successful. The earlier part of their advance proved easy, and not till nearly Tezze did they meet with serious opposition. Tezze is a straggling village, with a population of about 300 in normal times. The houses are of the usual Italian type—large and built of stone. In the fields immediately in front, parties of the enemy had taken up position, but 'A' Company, with

Digitized by Google

irresistible dash, had cleared each position. Here they captured three 77 millimetre field guns. Pushing on, Kendrick's Company entered Tezze. A scattered fight ensued. Parties of the enemy, firing from the houses, put up a good resistance. But the Staffords were not to be denied; each house was systematically cleared, and by 11.30 a.m. the whole village was in our hands. Two hundred prisoners and six machine guns were captured. By noon the line had been laid out and the Battalion in touch with adjoining Units on either flank.

Capture of Tezze.

"The frontage held by the Battalion included the village of Tezze, and ran in front of the Tezze—Zanetti to the road junction at Borgo Zanetti, where we were in touch with the 22nd Manchesters. Battalion Headquarters was established in the vicinity of Casa Ancillotto. The Battalion was now distributed as follows:—'A' and 'B' Companies, under Captains Kendrick and de Trafford, held the village of Tezze; 'D' Company, under Captain Robinson, prolonged the right to its junction with the Manchesters; 'C' Company was in reserve near Battalion Headquarters.

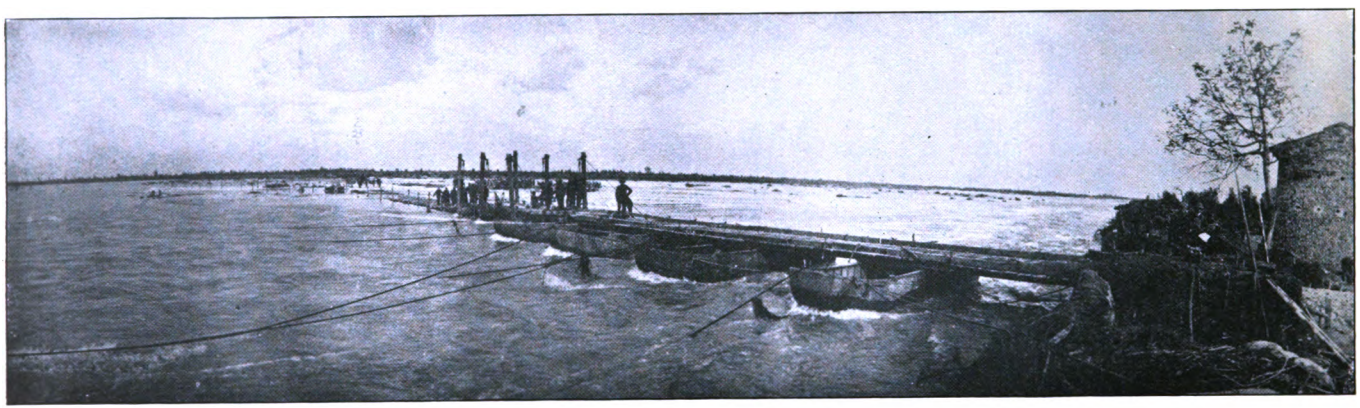
"The day had now cleared. A warm sun made everything very pleasant. The Staffords were in high humour and full of fight. Casualties had been small to troops used to the heavy fighting in France. To the old veterans of the Somme, Bullecourt and Flanders battles, this kind of fighting was a revelation. Tezze still contained many civilians, who were exceedingly glad to find themselves in friendly hands. When the Battalion, subsequent to the Armistice, marched back and were billeted in the village, a deputation waited upon the Commanding Officer to inquire the name of the Regiment and its Officers, in order to commemorate its liberation at their hands by a monument.

"A rather remarkable coincidence of the day's fighting was that the 1st South Staffords, who are in the old denomination, the 38th foot, had engaged and so utterly defeated the Austrian 38th Foot, who, more curiously still, belonged to their respective 7th Divisions. Fifteen machine guns and 450 prisoners, 3 field guns and an Officer's charger proved a good total for one day's fighting. During the afternoon, the Brig.-General Commanding, Brig.-General R. T. Pelly, C.M.G., D.S.O., visited the Battalion and congratulated them on their day's work. The afternoon passed quietly, save for exceptional flying on the part of hostile aircraft.

The Day's Bag.

"Shortly after nightfall, patrols pushed out succeeded in capturing some prisoners. These informed us that a counter-attack by six Battalions was in the course of preparation. Subsequent patrols proved the truth of their statement. The

Digitized by Google



Italian Official Photo.

BRIDGE OVER RIVER PIAVE.
1st Battalion crossed over for Attack.

PLATE 13.

To face p. 224.

Digitized by Google

UNIV. OF WIS.

Digitized by Google

Brigadier, being informed, placed one Company of the 2nd Queen's at the disposal of the Officer Commanding 1st South Staffords. These were used to strengthen the village garrison. The subsequent counter-attack mainly fell on the 23rd Division and the 22nd Manchesters. An attempt was made on the Battalion front, but, save for bombing one Lewis gun post, the hot reception accorded them seemed to have caused the enemy to leave us severely alone. The remainder of the night passed without incident. Rations and rum coming up, under R.Q.M.S. Riley, M.C., completed our satisfaction.

"About 9 a.m. on the following morning of the 28th October, the Brig.-General Commanding held a conference at our Battalion Headquarters, where the plans for the day's advance were disclosed. The South Staffords were to advance, take Borgo Belussi, a large village about one kilometre in front, and dig in a line about one kilometre beyond. The same units as in the previous day were to advance in the flanks.

"The necessary arrangements having been made, the Battalion again advanced at 12.30. Our previous day's success seemed to have demoralised the enemy. His machine guns only showed fight. Advancing in extended lines, the Battalion closed on Borgo Belussi. Two machine guns posted on the main road attempted to hold us up. Our Lewis gunners, however, shot down their teams without much difficulty. The village was soon encircled, and the houses cleared rapidly. About 10 Austrians were killed, 68 surrendering; 8 machine guns were also taken. The objective was reached shortly after 1 p.m. A searchlight, mounted on a lorry, was seized in one of the adjacent lanes.

Capture of Borgo Belussi.

"Civilians, mainly women, were found in Borgo Belussi. They were almost starving, the Austrians having seized all their foodstuffs. One unfortunate family was nearly frantic with terror. The Austrians had tried to hold their house, but our men crawling up shot them through the windows. Six lay side by side on the ground floor, and the terrified inmates were too demoralised to think of removing the bodies.

"The afternoon was specially noticeable for patrol activity. Great difficulty was found in choosing from the numerous volunteers. The result of one patrol is worthy of mention. Pushed out to get in touch with the retreating enemy, and not finding him, they pushed on to Vazzola. This was a large village, or rather small town, which in normal times would have a population of about 2,000 people. It lay about two kilometres in front of our present line. This they found full of activity, a pack train of about 100 animals being assembled. The whole place was a scene of wild confusion. Boldly advancing, they held up the pack train. Choosing seven

Raid on Vazzola.

Digitized by Google

animals, they mounted and returned in triumph to the Battalion. The leading spirit of the enterprise was Pte. Ross, 'A' Company. A second patrol, a platoon strong, was however, greeted with machine gun fire.

"About 5 p.m. the Battalion was relieved by the 2nd Battalion, The Queen's, and returned to Borgo Belussi to rest. The inhabitants there were very attentive and strove to do all they could for our comfort. Battalion Headquarters was in a huge house, which had previously been an Austrian Brigade Divisional Headquarters. The expected rest, however, proved not of long duration.

Attack on Vazzola.

"About 7.30 p.m. the Brig.-General Commanding visited Battalion Headquarters, and a conference of the Commanding Officers took place. A further advance and the seizing of Vazzola were proposed. To the South Staffords fell the task of taking Vazzola; the 2nd Queen's were to advance to the right. This news was greeted with mixed feelings. All were keen on a further advance, but were very weary. Rations, too, had failed to come up owing to the bombing and blowing up the pontoon bridge. About 10 p.m. the Battalion marched from Borgo Belussi and reached the line they had held during the afternoon about midnight. At 12.30 the advance on Vazzola was begun. We moved along the Tezze—Vazzola road. Going was slow owing to the difficulty the advanced and flank guards experienced in this close country. A message from the 8th Yorks informed us that they had established a post beyond Vazzola. The village, however, had not been entered, their party skirting it on the left. Between 1 a.m. and 2 a.m. the outskirts of the village were reached.

"The plan of attack adopted was as follows:—'A' Company, under Captain Kendrick, M.C., was to push round and seize the eastern exits of the village; 'C' Company, under Captain Cuxson, M.C., was to secure the northern exits, while de Trafford's Company ('B' Company) were allotted a similar task on the western side. Each Company was then to form an all-round defence and cut off any of the enemy who might attempt to escape. To 'D' Company, under Captain F. Robinson, M.C., was allotted the task of searching and clearing the village. Battalion Headquarters moved with this party.

"Everything was carried out in silence, and proceeded according to plan. The enemy were completely surprised. One Staff Officer and 47 unwounded prisoners, together with three machine guns, fell into our hands. A 77 mm. field gun was also taken. The inhabitants, roused by our searches, welcomed us very effusively, much valuable information regarding the enemy's movements being obtained. Touch

Digitized by Google

was got on both flanks, and the post of the 8th Yorks was strengthened by one of our platoons. A patrol, mounted on Officers' chargers, galloped about a kilometre ahead down the road leading to the Monticano river. None of the enemy were encountered. About 3 a.m., 29th, the enemy began to shell Vazzola. Although the fire seemed to be short range, little damage was done. This ceased about 7 a.m. Hostile aircraft were very busy during the night, constantly going backwards and forwards in relays. Their attentions were mainly confined to bombing the pontoon bridges on the Piave. The night passed quietly.

"The men were now very tired and in want of sleep. Rations had failed to reach us owing to the bombing of the pontoon bridges, and hunger added its quota to our discomforts. Everyone was very footsore, our boots having hardened after wading the Piave. All feared to take off their boots, lest they should be unable to put them on again. In spite of everything, the men's *morale* was very high. During the morning many managed a wash and shave, and when moving off subsequently presented a very smart appearance.

About 7 a.m., the Yeomanry, under Lieut.-Colonel Sir C. Lowther, reported at Battalion Headquarters. Having been given all available information, they passed through our line to harass the retreating enemy. About 8 a.m., the Divisional Commander, Major-General H. T. Shoubridge, C.M.G., D.S.O., accompanied by the Brig.-General Commanding, visited us, and his cheery presence and optimistic views greatly cheered us. He had also many kind things to say about the South Staffords. Plans for a further advance were then disclosed.

"About 10.30 a.m., 29th October, the advance was resumed. The Yeomanry had met with lively machine gun fire, and reconnaissances seemed to point to the enemy being very determined to hold the line of the Monticano river. This was a narrow river, not very deep. It offered, however, a good defensive position, owing to the fact that large earthen embankments, constructed to restrain the floods in Winter, followed its course on either bank. A belt of wire added to its strength. The Brigade moved off in the following order:— 2nd Battalion The Queen's formed the Advanced Guard, 22nd Manchesters followed the Queen's, and the Staffords brought up the rear. As the Brigade debouched from Vazzola a long range fire was opened. The enemy had cunningly constructed platforms in trees, which in the close vine country gave a good field of fire. Three men of the Battalion were wounded as we left the shelter of the houses. The enemy were also active with shrapnel. To escape further casualties we moved under cover of the road embankment. Our progress was necessarily

The Advance to the Monticano.

Digitized by Google

slow, the Advanced Guard finding the clearance of the country difficult. News dribbled back that the 8th Yorks had effected a crossing, and that the 2nd Queen's had also crossed the Monticano.

"At 12.50 p.m. the Brig.-General Commanding ordered us to advance and support the Queen's. Accordingly we moved forward to the Monticano. Here there was much liveliness. A light bridge was standing. Although prepared for being blown up, the fuses apparently did not act. The enemy was shelling it freely and raking it with machine gun fire. Across the bridge the Battalion rushed. Going in section rushes at top speed, a crossing was effected without any casualties. The Battalion was then concentrated under cover of the river Bund or embankment.

Crossing the Monticano.

"The situation was now as follows:—About 1½ kilometres in front lay a small village, Cimetta. The church and the roofs of the houses were only visible. The intervening ground was level, intersected with many deep dykes full of water. The country was very close, being covered with vines and fields of 'polenta,' a kind of Indian corn. The view was everywhere very restricted, owing to the vines. A previous attack was held up by heavy machine gun fire. From its volume and intensity it was evident that the enemy were in force. In consultation with the Commanding Officers already there, the Officer Commanding South Staffords decided that a fresh attack was necessary. To reinforce the troops already in the firing line might lead to difficulties of command and hold up any future progress. Speed in launching the attack was also essential. The enemy were freely shelling the Bund, and a few unlucky shells might cause heavy casualties. In addition, it was important not to allow the garrison of the village time to further organise its defences. Objectives were allotted, and the Company Commanders shown their objectives on the ground. A battery of Italian mountain guns, working in close touch with the Commanding Officer, were to put up a barrage to cover the attack. Some machine guns of the 7th Battalion, Machine Gun Corps, were also to give covering fire. The different tasks were allotted as follows:—'A' Company were to attack on the left of the church. 'C' Company were to take on the right front. 'D' Company were to move in close support in a central position and help where required. 'B' Company were to echelon two platoons to the right rear and guard the right flank of the attack. Two platoons of 'B' Company and Battalion Headquarters formed the Reserve.

Attack on Cimetta.

"At 2.15 p.m. our impromptu barrage opened, and at 2.30 p.m. the Battalion left the shelter of the Bund. Passing through the Queen's lines and advancing rapidly, the attack

Digitized by Google

got among the vines. Good use was made of all available cover, the deep dykes proving good re-forming places. The enemy machine guns now began to chatter in earnest, and bullets whistled overhead. The two platoons of 'B' Company encountered a large party of the enemy on the right flank, but, charging in gallant fashion, utterly routed them. These two platoons alone took 78 prisoners.

"The main attack was now going strongly. The enemy machine guns were making more noise than doing real harm. Skilful use of cover kept down casualties. Machine guns pushed forward some hundreds of yards in front of the village gave some trouble, but were quickly located and dealt with. Lieut. G. H. L. Eaton, a very fine type of young Officer, had a narrow escape whilst rushing one of these posts. Leaning forward to shoot into a trench, he was fired at from about five yards, the bullet entering under the rim of his steel helmet and tearing a jagged hole passed out at the top, leaving him uninjured. Many acts of gallantry in rushing these guns took place, many of which were afterwards fittingly rewarded. A feature of the attack was the initiative and push of the junior N.C.O.'s.

"The Battalion now had worked up to assaulting distance, and, forming up under cover of some outlying houses, prepared for the final charge. Reinforced by the supporting Company and headed by their Officers, the Staffords rushed forward. The Austrians fled for shelter to the houses, but each house was quickly surrounded. Rifles emptied into the interior soon brought the enemy out again. Isolated little fights around the houses continued for some time, but the issue was never in doubt. Soon the Staffords found the number of prisoners exceeding themselves. About 3.30 p.m. the whole of the village was in our hands. Fifteen machine guns and over 700 prisoners were sent down. The line was then pushed forward in advance of the village, and the work of consolidation begun.

38th take Cimetta.

"During the afternoon the village became very unhealthy. Large numbers of the enemy had taken up positions in the vines in front, and kept up a persistent fire. Bullets coming from front and flank spattered on the walls, and whined along the streets. Fits of spasmodic shelling made things further unpleasant. A few inhabitants still survived in the village. Strange to say, they did not seem to mind the shelling as much as we did. Battalion Headquarters had an unpleasant visitor during the course of the afternoon in the shape of a shell that knocked the corner off a window of the room.

"The situation was now as follows:—The Battalion was in touch with the Yorks and Lancs. (Lieut.-Colonel Rumbold,

Digitized by Google

D.S.O.) on the left, while on the right a large gap extended between it and the 20th Brigade. To remedy this was a pressing need. Accordingly, we arranged to hand over the defence of the village to the 2nd Queen's, while the South Staffs. side stepped to the right and filled this gap. About 7 p.m. the Queen's relieved us, and the Battalion moved to its new position, forming a defensive flank facing north-east from Cimetta to the Monticano. This was fairly well entrenched by 10 p.m. Battalion Headquarters was established in a house near the Bund. About this time our much-longed-for rations and rum came up, the appearance of R.Q.M.S. A. Riley's cheerful face being very welcome.

"The night of the 29th/30th proved uneventful. About 5 p.m., 30th of October, a patrol of picked scouts carried out a daring reconnaissance, reaching the vicinity of Ferracini, about a kilometre in front of the line. The enemy were in full retreat. About 9 a.m. the 1st Royal Welsh Fusiliers, of the 22nd Brigade, passed through and carried on the advance.

"To appreciate fully the spirit shown by the Battalion during the operations round Cimetta, it is well to recall what they had already done. On the 26th they had spent a miserably cold night under continuous shell fire and a steady rain. On the 27th they had waded numerous breast high streams, had fought from 6 o'clock till noon, capturing three villages. On the 28th they were again in action, capturing Borgo Belussi, and at midnight again advanced and took Vazzola. They had been without sleep since the 25th, save for a few hours on the night of the 26th/27th. Rations had failed to arrive on the 27th, yet, despite their weariness and lack of food, the attack on Cimetta was carried through with rare dash and determination. Cimetta proved the last real attempt by the Austrians to stem our advance. From the beginning, the Staffords had led the van of the 7th Division. They had in three days' fighting taken 48 machine guns, 4 field guns, and a rough total of 1,200 prisoners. An indication of the spirit of the Battalion is exemplified by the description of the cool courage and gallantry of Captain F. A. Kendrick, M.C., during the attack on Cimetta. This Officer, during the previous days' fighting, had done splendid work. Shortly after the beginning of the attack on the 29th, he had his left arm shattered by a bullet and broken near the elbow. Roughly bandaged, he continued to lead forward his Company. A few minutes later he was again wounded, a bullet passing through his right arm. Again he had his wound bound up, and pressed on with his men. Assisted by his orderly, he somehow managed to cross the many intervening dykes, and finally led his Company in the charge on the village. He was conspicuous in the fighting round the church. When the village was at last cleared, he

The Fighting Spirit of the 38th.

Digitized by Google

coolly supervised the laying out of a defensive line and set his men to work digging in. Not till he saw his Company satisfactorily consolidating did he consent to go to the Dressing Station. Before leaving, he gave a clear account of his dispositions to his Commanding Officer. His gallantry was rewarded by the D.S.O. Officers and men were both equally deserving of the highest praise. Decorations may not fall to the lot of everyone. Where all are splendid, it is very hard to choose the most worthy.

"The advance now taken up by the 22nd Brigade rolled on its way. About noon on the 30th October, the Battalion left their positions taken up on the evening of the 29th October and assembled at Cimetta. Weary and with all the stains of battle, the spirits of the men were nevertheless high. An improvised transport caused much amusement. Captured pack ponies were harnessed with a weird collection of ropes. Little two-wheeled carts, in which the Austrian carries his machine guns, were linked together in threes with much ingenuity and attached to the pack ponies. On these were carried the Lewis guns and magazines. In spite of their appearance, they served their purpose and relieved the men of this extra weight.

"About 3 p.m., the Battalion started on its march to Roverbasso. The roads were full of all the pageantry of moving warfare. Long lines of Italian cavalry dashed by at the gallop. We weary foot sloggers envied them their splendid mounts. Armoured cars, too, were much in evidence, receiving the name of 'Machonichie Tins' from the ever-humorous Tommy. The liberated inhabitants flocking from their houses looked with eager eyes on the British soldier. Italian flags, brought from well-secreted hiding places, hung at every window. It seemed indeed like a triumphal procession. Roverbasso was reached about 8 p.m., and fairly decent billets awaited us. A hot meal was ready almost on arrival, and the weary men lost no time in turning in. A shell whining over us reminded us of the War, but salvoes would not have caused us to worry. Next morning only did we learn that the front was scarcely a mile ahead. At Roverbasso we remained until the 2nd November, the time being devoted to rest and cleaning up. Here we learned of the Turks' downfall. On the morning of the 2nd November we left Roverbasso at 7 a.m., and, crossing the Livenza, marched to Pordenone, which we reached about 8 p.m. It was a long and trying march. Pordenone is a fairly large town. It was looted by the Bosche. Shops were broken open and the contents littered the streets. Some houses, fired by the Austrians, were still burning. Billets, however, were good. Next day saw us again on foot, and in the evening we

March to Pordenone.

Digitized by Google

arrived at the little town of Cordenons. The day was mainly spent halted in fields by the roadside, waiting for the orders which would give us our final destination. Rumours of Austrian requests for an Armistice now became very prevalent. Brilliantly lit Staff cars going to and returning from the front provided the rumour-mongers with what seemed convincing evidence. Negotiations were, in fact, taking place.

The Austrian Armistice.

"On Monday, 4th November, the Battalion moved to Rauscedo, a poor village close to the river Tagliamento. Two Companies, under Major L. L. Hassell, D.S.O., M.C., were left at Cordenons to act as guards to prisoners of war. At Rauscedo we got official news that the Armistice was to come into effect on that day, at 3 p.m.

"*The last gun was heard about 2.30 p.m.*

"So at Rauscedo was ended the Battalion's advance. That night about midnight we were inundated by 1,400 Austrian prisoners, including one Divisional Commander, several Colonels, and about 200 Officers. The Austrian Officers' batmen were wonderful fellows. How they managed to move, laden sometimes with two heavy valises and numerous bundles puzzled all who saw them. In the morning all were sent back to the Corps Cage. This was the last incident of the advance.

The End of the Piave Battles.

A few days afterwards the Battalion began to move back through the country it had helped to liberate. To relate at length the deeds of various individuals would prove a long and difficult task, yet a record of this battle would not be complete without a reference to the splendid work of our Medical Officer, Captain W. Logan Scott, M.C. He had served with the Battalion during many heavy engagements in France. On the Piave, his long experience, his unfailing cheerfulness and attention to the wounded were of great assistance to the Battalion. The Padre, the Rev. W. Parker, who insisted on coming with us, shared his labours, showing himself a real fighting Padre.

"Thus ended the battle of the Piave. A blow had been struck which shattered the fabric of the Central Empires. To the lot of the 7th Division had fallen the honour of being foremost in the assault which had broken the Austrian Army. In the 7th Division the South Staffords had led the van. From the crossing of the Piave to the capture of Cimetta, followed by the rapid retreat and demoralisation of the enemy, the 38th had formed part of the fighting line. Officers had lived up to the great fighting traditions of their Regiment, and added to the long list of victories on their Colours another and very glorious achievement."(1)

---

(1) Lieut.-Colonel W. R. English-Murphy, D.S.O., M.C.

Digitized by Google

The following message was received from Brigade Headquarters:—"From His Majesty the King to General the Earl of Cavan. With all my heart I congratulate you and the 14th Corps upon the splendid victory achieved fighting side by side with the Italian troops of the 10th Army, resulting in the Armistice which takes effect to-day. For your great services I thank you. GEORGE R.I. 4th November, 1918."

The total number of prisoners taken by the 1st Battalion during the operations of 26th, 27th, 28th and 29th October was 1,400, while the guns captured included 41 machine guns, 4 field guns, with 8 pack animals and 1 searchlight.

On the conclusion of hostilities, Major-General A. T. Shoubridge, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., Commanding 7th Division, visited the Battalion, and left the following verbal message to be conveyed to all ranks:—

"I am too much an old friend of the South Staffords to send them a formal message of congratulation, but tell them all that I always expected great things of the Staffords, but they have exceeded even my expectations. I congratulate everyone most heartily."

The Brigade Commander, Brig.-General R. T. Pelly, C.M.G., D.S.O., sent the following message:—

"Officers, N.C.O.'s and men of the 91st Brigade.

"I wish to make some attempt to express my admiration of your conduct during the recent battle. The Brigade has taken a leading part in the crushing defeat inflicted on the Austrians. Not only the fighting, but the hardships entailed by the fording of the Piave, the long period without rest or sleep, the constant attacks and advances by night and day, called for skill, endurance, and soldierly spirit of the very highest order.

"I was always proud of the 91st Brigade, but your conduct in our recent victory has made me prouder than ever of commanding a Brigade composed of such men."

The Battalion Commander, Lieut.-Colonel W. R. English-Murphy, M.C., addressed the Battalion as follows:—

"To the Officers and other ranks of the Battalion.

"I wish to express in some small degree my deep appreciation of your gallant conduct and endurance during the recent operations. You have splendidly maintained the high traditions of the 38th and added another very glorious page to its annals.

Digitized by Google

"In spite of extreme fatigue, and under very difficult conditions, every call made upon you met with an instant and cheerful response. I esteem it a very high honour indeed to have commanded such a splendid Battalion in action. My only regret is that I cannot find fitting words to tell you how highly I think of you, and how proud I am of you, one and all."

On November 8th, the 1st Battalion began its return march to its assembly camp at Terrosa, and on the 11th November recrossed the Piave under more pleasant conditions than when they went forward to the attack on the night of October 26th, for the Royal Engineers had now constructed a pontoon bridge over the river. News was received from France that fighting ceased on all fronts at 11 o'clock a.m., the Armistice having been signed, and the following General Order was issued by General F. R. the Earl of Cavan, K.P., K.C.B., M.V.O.:—

38th Recross the Piave.

"The Germans have signed the Armistice, and fighting ceased in the whole vast area of the Great War at 11 o'clock on Monday, November 11th.

"I thank you all, from highest to lowest, with all my heart for the way in which you have upheld British honour in Italy, not only in battle but in billets.

"We have now to wait patiently for the final Peace and our orders for demobilisation.

"During this waiting period everything possible will be done to keep up your good health and good spirits. Educational schemes open to all will be made known to you, and will, I hope, be fully taken advantage of. Every sort of competition will be organised, and the Silver Football Challenge Cup, now held by the 23rd Division, will be played for.

The War Ends Nov. 11th, 1918.

"The whole system of demobilisation will be explained to you as soon as the Army Council's instructions are received.

"I confidently ask you all, in this great hour of victory, not to spoil by any foolish acts of impatience the glorious reputation you have made in Italy as British soldiers and British gentlemen.

"(Signed) CAVAN, General,
"Commanding in Chief, British Force in Italy.

General Headquarters,
13th November, 1918."

The usual routine and training was carried out while at Terrosa, and on Sunday, November 17th, a Parade Thanksgiving United Service was held for Church of England and

Digitized by Google

Nonconformists in the open air, while service for Roman Catholics took place in the Parish Church, Terrosa.

For the remainder of November military training varied with periods of recreation, and Educational Classes in English History, Reading and Writing, Mathematics, French, Shorthand and Book-keeping were formed, under competent instructors. The classes were well attended. During the month of December, Military, Recreational and Educational Training was carried out daily, and Lectures were delivered to Companies on the Government system of demobilisation. On the 20th December, the 1st Battalion defeated the 2nd Queen's Regiment 6 goals to 1 in a round for the "Shoubridge Football Cup" Competition. On Monday, December 23rd, the first party for demobilisation, twenty-three coal-miners, proceeded to England for dispersal. They were given a rousing "send-off," headed by the Band.

Christmas Day, 1918, was an enjoyable day for all ranks. Special Christmas fare was provided, for the Battalion had received a sum of £150 towards the cost, contributed by the "*Express & Star* and Mr. J. B. Dumbell's Soldiers' and Prisoners' Comfort Fund, Wolverhampton." This, with £25 also received from the Borough of Walsall Soldiers' Fund, enabled the Officers to provide a sumptuous Christmas feast. In addition, football, games and cigarettes were provided by "Mr. J. B. Dumbell's Fund." The weather was damp and cold, but this did not prevent the festivities being continued on the 26th. Next day, an Organ and Instrumental Recital was given in the Parish Church at Terrossa, by 2nd Lieut. Collins, 22nd Manchester Regiment (late sub-organist of Ely Cathedral) and the Band of the 1st South Staffords. On December 30th, the second party of twenty-two coal-miners was despatched to England for dispersal.

Christmas Comforts.

The opening days of the New Year found the 1st Battalion still in billets at Terrossa di Ronca, a small Italian village on the southern slopes of a horseshoe-shaped ridge of foothills about midway between Vicenza and Verona, where training was still carried on daily. Brig.-General R. M. Ovens, C.M.G., Commanding 207th Infantry Brigade, sent the following message to his old Battalion:—"Warmest wishes to all ranks of my good old Battalion. A very happy New Year to all."

On January 2nd, the Regiment played the 22nd Manchesters in the round for the "Shoubridge Cup," but owing to the early demobilisation of miners, the team was very much weakened, and for the first time in four seasons they were defeated by 3 goals to 2.

Digitized by Google

38th at Terrossa.

The Battalion remained at Terrossa, training each day, until February 23rd. During this period parties were continually leaving the Battalion for England for dispersal, so that eventually it was only possible to form one Company for administrative purposes. On February 14th, 7 Officers and 150 other ranks had been transferred to the 22nd Manchester Regiment for service with the Army of Occupation in Austria, and finally, all Officers and other ranks surplus to cadre establishment were transferred to the 9th (Pioneer) Battalion, South Staffords.

The wisdom of providing Educational Classes during the period covering demobilisation proved to be amply justified, for considerable keenness was shown by the students who attended, many of whom passed to more advanced Courses at Divisional School. The lending and reference library attached to the Recreation Hut also provided a means of private study of which the men availed themselves extensively. In addition, the Educational Courses were supplemented by Lectures and interesting and enjoyable trips to Venice and Verona.

The Recreational Training also provided a means of keeping the men interested and fit, and prevented them from thinking too much about the delays in demobilisation. These games had to be curtailed, owing to the lack of playing fields. The Battalion was situated in a highly cultivated district covered with vines and mulberry trees. Grass fields were almost unknown, and where they did exist, were too small for holding Winter sports. Again, the weather was unfavourable, on many occasions rendering the existing playing ground impossible. Basket Ball was introduced, and soon gained great popularity, Inter-Company and Inter-Platoon games being played.

Sports.

In outside competitions the Battalion did extremely well, especially in the Italian Expeditionary Force Championships and Novices' Boxing Competition. Five out of seven events passed to the semi-finals, and three of these fought to the finals. Sergt. E. Ballinger won the Feather-weight, Novices, after a brilliant fight. Pte. Newell won the Welter-weight, Novices, after a hard fight and an extra round. Sergt. Corser fought in the final of the Light-weight, Novices, but to a very good winner, Pte. Lemon fought his way into the semi-final of the Feather-weight, Open, but was beaten by the winner in that weight, while Lce-Corpl. Isaacs fought in the semi-final of the Welter-weight, Open, and was beaten by the winner of this competition. In the General Headquarters Cross-country Running, three competitors of the 1st Battalion were placed in the first twenty, and Sergt. Sharp was included in the Divisional Team.

Digitized by Google

On January 30th, 1919, Major-General A. T. Shoubridge, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O. (Commanding Officer 7th Division) presented the 1st Battalion with a splendid Cup for obtaining the highest number of points in the Sports Championship of the Division for the Winter of 1918-1919.

On February 24th, 1919, the cadre of the Battalion, with a strength of 6 Officers and 48 other ranks, under Lieut.-Colonel W. R. English-Murphy, D.S.O., M.C., entrained at Tavernelle for England. They arrived at Lichfield on March 4th, and marched to Whittington Barracks in a heavy downpour of rain, becoming attached to the Depôt, South Staffordshire Regiment.

A few days after their return the Battalion was given a public reception at Walsall, and entertained by the Mayor and Corporation. Lieut.-Colonel W. R. English-Murphy, D.S.O., M.C., retired from the command in July, 1919, and on November 17th, the same year, the Regiment, now up to full strength, left their Headquarters at Lichfield and embarked at London Docks, under the command of Lieut.-Colonel L. B. Boyd-Moss, C.M.G., D.S.O., for Singapore. The 1st Battalion is now (1923) serving at Maymyo, Burmah, under the command of Lieut.-Colonel R. W. Morgan, C.M.G., D.S.O.

38th on Foreign Service.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE RECORD OF THE 2ND BATTALION.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



Photo. OFFICERS, 2ND BATTALION, ALDERSHOT, 1914. *Gale & Polden.*

LEFT TO RIGHT FACING PHOTO.

Back Row.—LIEUT. P. F. KEENE, LIEUT. RUTHERFORD (Special Reserve), LIEUT. A. B. BAUMANN, LIEUT. J. S. SHARPE, LIEUT. J. S. TOWNSHEND, LIEUT. J. L. DENT, LIEUT. BIRCH (Special Reserve), CAPT. S. G. JOHNSON, 2ND LIEUT. G. T. MILLER, LIEUT. F. H. GUNNER, LIEUT. BALL (R.A.M.C. Medical Officer to Battalion).

Second Row.—CAPT. A. F. G. KILBY, CAPT. H. M. POWELL, CAPT. C. F. F. HODGSON, LIEUT. & ADJT. J. C. CHAYTOR, MAJOR H. E. WALSHE, LIEUT.-COL. C. S. DAVIDSON, MAJOR P. C. L. ROUTLEDGE, CAPT. A. H. C. JAMES, CAPT. M. B. SAVAGE, CAPT. R. DUCKWORTH, CAPT. C. H. THOMAS.

Front Row.—LIEUT. NIXON (Special Reserve), LIEUT. TURNER (Special Reserve), LIEUT. TAUNTON (Special Reserve), 2ND LIEUT. GYDE, LIEUT. WANSBROUGH (Special Reserve), 2ND LIEUT. R. R. O'C. MILLER, 2ND LIEUT. FARWELL, LIEUT. ROBINSON (Special Reserve).

MAJOR NINOMYIA, Imperial Japanese Army, was attached to the Battalion at Aldershot, on Declaration of War.

To face p. 240.

PLATE 14.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE RECORD OF THE 2ND BATTALION, 1914.

(THE OLD 80TH.)

Major Dent's Diary—War Declared—Landing in France—The Advance to Mons—The Historic Retreat from Mons—Saving the Guns—Battles of the Marne and the Aisne—Hurried Move to Ypres—First Battle of Ypres—"How the South Staffordshires Held the Trench"—Defence of Givenchy—Christmas in the Trenches.

THE story of the dark days of the retreat from Mons is graphically described in a Diary compiled by the late Brev.-Major J. L. Dent, D.S.O., M.C., 2nd South Staffordshire Regiment, who was killed in action at Arras, on April 11th, 1917. This Diary is of intensely human interest, and reveals the spirit which animated Officers and men; I asked Mrs. Dent's permission to print it in this history; to this request she very kindly consented. Such an interesting and faithful record of the early days of the War deserves to be enshrined in a History of the Regiment.

The notes I have inserted are intended to show the sequence of the events narrated. At the outbreak of the War, Lieut. J. L. Dent, as he was then, was senior Lieutenant of "A" Company, 2nd Battalion, South Staffordshire Regiment; and although it is perhaps more personal to that Company than any other, it may be taken as a record of the work of the Battalion for the period it covers. Lieut. J. L. Dent was awarded the D.S.O. for a very daring piece of patrol work on the Aisne, 8th October, 1914; and later was awarded the M.C. He was killed in action, April 11th, 1917. His Diary ends October 6th, 1914, shortly before the Battalion went into action at Pilkem Ridge, north of Ypres, on 23rd October, 1914, where he was wounded.

The 2nd South Staffords were part of the 6th Infantry Brigade of the 2nd Division, one of the immortal Divisions of the original British Expeditionary Force, who covered themselves with glory in the first year of the War, and stopped the German attempt to capture the Channel Ports.

Digitized by Google

DIARY OF THE EUROPEAN WAR.[1]

SATURDAY, 1st AUGUST:

On the 1st August it was quite obvious to everyone that war was inevitable, and Aldershot was shaken from its usual calm. Officers thronged the main streets buying in a hurry the things they needed, and the outfitters, outside whose shops there were regular queues, were very quickly sold out of everything useful. Officers dismantled their rooms and packed their effects, and the mess rooms rapidly assumed a most forlorn appearance, denuded of pictures and regimental property. Although the actual order for mobilisation had not been proclaimed, preliminary orders were sent round which enabled the work to be got well on the way. When the final order did come, everything went without a hitch, and we were ready and impatient to get away at the end of the scheduled time.

War Declared, 4th August, 1914.

We had several days to wait at Aldershot, and, up to the last moment, the time of movement was kept rigidly secret. In the meantime, there was plenty to do in putting on the finishing touches and shaking down the Reservists, many of whom had not soldiered for nearly six years, and were not used to the new rifle and equipment. We went for route marches, fired on the range, and did Fire Direction. The men were very cheerful; most of them spoke well of their employers, who, in many cases, were giving or had promised to give their wives a liberal allowance during their absence. The general opinion was that the War would be over by Christmas, an optimistic view I by no means shared. but, naturally, did not say so. Major-General C. C. Munro, C.B.[2] commanding the 2nd Division, came to inspect the Battalion on the parade ground. He made a most inspiring speech and was heartily cheered on leaving. On the following day we were honoured by a farewell visit from their Majesties the King and Queen, who rapidly made the tour of Aldershot. They inspected the 6th Brigade and shook hands with the Officers commanding Battalions. From this visit we rightly inferred that our departure was imminent.[3]

---

(1) Diary of Brev.-Major/Captain Dent, D.S.O., M.C.

(2) Major-General C. C. Munro, C.B., commanded the 2nd Division in France from August, 1914, until 26th December, 1914.

(3) The 6th Infantry Brigade was commanded by Brig.-General R. H. Davies, C.B.

Digitized by Google

TUESDAY, 11th AUGUST:

Our departure was nothing if not dramatic. We fell in and the roll was called in the dead of night. After much hand shaking with the unfortunates who, for some reason or other, were left behind, we marched off in absolute silence to Farnborough Station, unknown to the sleeping inhabitants of Aldershot. After what seemed to me quite a fair march, wrapped up as I was in the full impedimenta of war for the first time, and looking more like a Christmas tree than anything else, we arrived at the station. We found there that half the station guard had departed, searching the country round in pursuit of a spy who had attempted to cut the telephone wires. I don't know whether they caught him in the end or not—when we left, they were still searching. The entrainment was effected without incident, and, after a rather uncomfortable attempt to sleep in the train, we found ourselves, at dawn, gliding into Southampton Docks Siding.

The "Irrawaddy" was in dock waiting for us there. It did not take long for us to embark, and the Liverpool Regiment, whose train followed ours, were on board soon after. The two Battalions absolutely filled the ship; the men were packed like sardines, and, when equipment had been removed, there was scarcely room for all to lie down. It can easily be understood that meals under these conditions was no easy matter, and the feeding arrangements for both Officers and men rather broke down. We left dock at about 2 p.m. under Sealed Orders, passed slowly down the Solent and turned into Sandown, where we anchored and were passed by another transport carrying the Royal Berkshires and 60th Rifles, the other two Battalions of our Brigade. Here we took on board a pilot and had wireless apparatus installed. We started off again at a slow and dignified pace in a south-easterly direction, probably escorted in the distance by cruisers or submarines.

I had a cabin with two others, and, missing my sleep of the night before, took the opportunity of turning in early. We were awakened soon after dawn by the sound of unmistakably foreign cheers, "Eep! eep! oorah!" coming across the water, and, on hurriedly looking out of the port hole, discovered that we were slowly making our way into Le Havre, welcomed by enthusiastic coastguards, waving flags of the Allies, gesticulating and cheering. **In France.**

THURSDAY, 13th AUGUST:

We landed, and, without waiting for our transport to disembark, we proceeded to march to the Rest Camp, which was situated about six miles away on the summit of a hill commanding the harbour. We had to march through the town most of the way, and our reception was truly terrific,

Digitized by Google

beggaring description. The town was *en fête*, flags and banners welcoming *les braves Anglais* were displayed on all sides. and our march became a triumphal procession between cheering crowds. We had been to some pains in teaching the men the Marseillaise and there were a good many mouth organs amongst the Company, so that, when we struck up, there was a tremendous burst of enthusiasm, and the crowds nearly went mad, flinging flowers down for us to walk over. The march did not, however, end very gloriously. The men had had two bad nights and little food on the boats; the heat was absolutely terrific, and the march between dense crowds through narrow streets was almost suffocating.

In addition, the weight of the equipment carried was found very trying by the Reservists, and it was a steady pull up steep hills over cobble stones the whole way.

The men soon became exhausted, and it was impossible to prevent the well meaning populace from pouring wines and liqueurs down their throats whenever there was a halt. Tommy is not used to either wines or liqueurs. The natural result was that a great many men collapsed, and a large number fell out. These were increased when the men in the ranks passed those who had fallen out and saw them being fanned, bathed with eau de Cologne and revived with brandy by pretty French girls.

When we finally arrived, we rested the whole afternoon and allowed our soaking shirts to dry in the sun.

FRIDAY, 14th AUGUST:

After a parade for musketry instruction in the morning, numerous maps were issued, and the Battalion fell in to hear the King's message and give three cheers. It was rather difficult to keep the inquisitive, but interested inhabitants from over-running the whole camp, and I was several times embarrassed during my ablutions by a female head intruding through the tent flap. In the evening large numbers of the men collected together on the road outside the camp and fraternised with the inhabitants. A sing-song was soon in full swing, concluding with the National Anthems of the Allies, and the French people sang "God save the King" with great enthusiasm.

An Englishman with an old racing car and a donkey cart (strangely mixed transports) brought up supplies and catered for us while we were in camp. We were much impressed with the cheapness and excellence of the French beer.

The night of the 13th was memorable in that it produced the most terrific thunderstorm it has ever been my luck to

Digitized by Google

experience, and I never wish to be nearer death by lightning. One flash came so near that the two other occupants of the tent and myself experienced the feeling of being violently hit and temporarily paralysed; it was most unpleasant. Following the lightning, there came torrential rains, which I have rarely seen equalled, even in South Africa. The rain had not ceased when we paraded in the dark of the early morning for our march to the station, and everyone got thoroughly wet.

SATURDAY, 15th AUGUST:

After a long wait at the station, during which we took the opportunity of cooking breakfast, we finally moved off (with the men packed like sardines—40 in a cattle truck) at about 11 a.m. and ignorant, as usual, of our destination. The train proceeded slowly up country, and at every station we had a terrific reception, and were presented with bouquets, coffee and wines. The men started to give away badges to gratify the perpetual cry of "Souvenir" and in return for favours received.

We were able, by observing the badges presented by other units and worn with pride by the women and children, to find out what units had already preceded us.

SUNDAY, 16th AUGUST:

After an uncomfortable attempt to sleep in the train, we arrived very early in the morning at Wassigny, about two days' march from the Belgian frontier, and the Headquarters both of the 2nd Division and the 1st Army Corps. We had to march about seven miles to our regimental billeting area, which consisted of the small and scattered village of Iron. "A" Company were very lucky in being most comfortably placed; the men were in barns with plenty of straw, and the officers in two houses.

Billets at Iron.

Captain Savage, Rutherford and myself were in the farmhouse of M. and Mme. Picquart, most delightful and hospitable people. Madame's cooking was a revelation, and would have done credit to the Savoy. We thoroughly over-eat ourselves and built up our constitutions for the coming struggle. On one occasion we had rabbit for dinner, and I, having several times watched a cage of tame rabbits in the yard, was immediately suspicious. My worst fears were confirmed next morning when, on inspection, there was one deficient. To add insult to injury, the skin of the dear departed had been hung up to dry in the cage, for what purpose I cannot imagine; but, perhaps, it was as the French said of the death of Admiral Byng a century ago, "*Pour encourager les autres.*" Monsieur, Madame and Maurice, a

Digitized by Google

son aged 15, sat down to meals with us, and Madame did the waiting as well. We had most interesting discussions on the War, and, by not minding making awful howlers, we certainly vastly improved our French in the short time we were there. Monsieur was too old to serve, but he went on duty as a special constable every night with his brassard, rifle and bayonet. The Picquarts were very confident in the success of the English and French armies, and, having known what invasion was in '70, they were more than ready to do everything they possibly could for us, the potential defenders of their homes. We had visitors several times, and the wife of the owner of the local silk factory came in to sing to us. One day, we were all invited to go over the factory and we went, accompanied by the Picquarts. A bottle of champagne was opened in our honour, and we were shown all the machinery of weaving, left idle, of course, by the call to the Colours. We had to do something to keep the men fit, and parades were held daily for route marching and musketry instructions. The men were feeding very well, and the Company cooker was a great success. Everyone was feeling fit for anything. On another occasion, we massed the few drums we had with us and they played at Retreat to the great delight of the villagers; it was very nice to hear "Lasses and Lads" again.

The evening before we left we foregathered in the Mill, where "D" Company Officers were billeted, and took the Picquarts and other villagers with us. We had a tremendous sing-song, and the excitement was intensely inspiring when we sang the Marseillaise. "*Aux armes, citoyens!*" we shouted at the top of our voices, and all the inhabitants, old men, women and young children, drew their hands across their throats when they came to the line, "*Qu'un sang prussien abreuve nos sillons.*"

FRIDAY, 21st AUGUST:

We left Iron at 6 a.m. Madame, who had treated me as a son, wept as she said good-bye to us, and I gave her a small brooch with the Staffordshire knot as a souvenir.

We marched out to the encouraging cheers of the villagers, and little thought that, in but five days' time, we should be retreating and abandoning the houses of the kind friends of Iron to the ravages of the Huns. The march was long, about 22 kilometres, and the heat was rather overpowering; already, the few men who were really unfit for the hardships of a campaign, in spite of having passed the medical inspection, could be distinguished, and it was decided to weed them out as soon as possible. We arrived at Landrecies, the scene of the great fight of the Guards' Brigade, a few days later, at about 3 p.m., and were billeted in French Barracks, which

Landrecies.

Digitized by Google

were none too clean. "A" Company Officers were billeted on the local brewer, who had a large and comfortable house. Incidentally, it was not improved by the advent of our valises into the drawing room. I, having undertaken the thankless job of Company P.M.C., took the maid of the house with me and made the necessary purchases in the town. I met there numbers of Officers from the other Battalions of the Brigade in search of provender like myself. We had seen very little of anyone outside the Regiment at Iron, and it was very nice to be able to exchange news.

SATURDAY, 22nd AUGUST:

We had a surprise order at 4 a.m. in the morning and had to turn out quickly, after a hasty breakfast of delicious coffee and bread and butter, prepared by Madame. We did not move off until 5 a.m., when we marched out of the town, by the road, and over the bridge, which, later, were to be packed high with German corpses. Our march was long, dusty and thirsty, and we were thoroughly fatigued when we finally arrived at the little village of Hargnies at three in the afternoon. Already the water difficulty, which was to be one of the greatest trials during the retreat, was beginning to make itself felt. Hargnies was a small village, totally inadequate for the accommodation of the Brigade, and most of the men had to bivouac. "A" Company were in an orchard, rather a temptation, especially to thirsty men with a water cart very long in coming. We found a brewery near, and for a small sum Savage and I purchased a barrel of beer, which two yokels carried on a strange form of sling to the bivouac. We were in the middle of the beer issue, which, I need hardly say, was most appreciated, when the order came round to fall in. It must be admitted our spirits rather fell; after all, we were in much need of rest. Ultimately, we were told to fall out again, but to be ready to fall in at any moment. We were now near the Belgian frontier, and we came to the conclusion that orders of this nature predicted an engagement with the enemy before very long. We spent the night, or, rather, as much of it as we were allowed, in sleep on the floor of a cottage. The cottagers had kindly produced mattresses, and we were quite comfortable. It was the last time we were to lie under a roof for many days to come.

At Hargnies.

SUNDAY, 23rd AUGUST:

At two in the morning, the order came, and we started off in the dark. I blessed the day I bought an electric torch. We were some time in getting clear of the village, which was congested with transport, and we then swung along at a moderate pace in the direction of the Belgian Frontier. At 8 o'clock we were near a Frontier post, and a halt for half an

Digitized by Google

hour was called. The men had had no food, and the cookers were hurried up quickly from the rear of the Column. At that early hour, boiled bacon and tea, though none too hot and rather greasy (I suspect the tea and bacon may have shared the same dixie), tasted excellent. Before moving off, the Colonel called up the Officers and gave us the first information of the enemy. Our Cavalry, he informed us, was in touch with them, and we were to push on and hold the line St. Symphorien—Bray. In the event of the enemy being already there, we were to drive him out at all costs. We went back to our Companies and Platoons and told the men that a great effort had to be made. In spite of great fatigue every man seemed to be suddenly infused with new energy, and there was a chorus of "We'll do it." Our march continued across the Belgian Frontier, alongside a forest and through several villages, in which the inhabitants came out to cheer us with the cry, "*A Berlin!*" We finally arrived close to the village of Harmignies, passing on the way, the whole of the artillery of the 2nd Division. We halted there and received fresh orders. The Battalion were to take up a position extending from Harmignies village, where Battalion Headquarters were established, towards the village and railway station at Villereille-le-Sec, occupied by the Royal Berkshires. "A" Company occupied the right of the line, with two platoons in the firing line and two in support. There was a considerable gap between the Company and the Royal Berkshires, but the 60th Rifles in Brigade Reserve were escheloned to the right-rear of us and ready to occupy the interval. To the left of Harmignies the British line ran over a spur, which jutted out in a north-easterly direction towards the enemy; from thence, it lay in the direction of Mons, where the 2nd Corps was situated. The spur was not held at the extremity nearest the enemy. Harmignies lay at the head of a small valley between the aforementioned spur and some high ground lower than, and south of it. On this high ground "A" Company had scarcely taken up position when the sound of distant guns reached us. Before long the sound came obviously nearer, from the direction of Mons, the high promontaries surrounding which place could be distinctly seen over the village and spur in the distance.

In Belgium.

Harmignies.

There was a road running over the advanced portion of the spur, and disappearing over the crest line half left from "A" Company's trenches. We had scarcely completed the very unpretentious trenches on which we, despite fatigue, had been ceaselessly working with the light entrenching tool since our arrival, when I saw artillery fire for the first time, and I shall never forget my first impressions of its power. At about 5 p.m., coming over the crest line, where the road I have

Digitized by Google

mentioned disappeared, small bodies of our cavalry and cyclists could be seen, evidently retiring and clearing the front. They halted and massed on one side of the crest, apparently, out of view of the enemy. They had been there scarcely ten minutes, when six shells burst in flashes of flame surrounded by balls of smoke, with deadly accuracy, directly above them. The ground all around them was swept by a hail of shrapnel, which, on the dry ground, raised clouds of dust. This burst was followed by another and then another; evidently, several batteries were opening rapid fire on the excellent target. The cavalry were mounted in a moment, and streamed down the side of the spur towards the village, leaving many dead men and struggling and riderless horses. Following this burst of shrapnel, there came burst after burst of high explosive shells, which dropped with what seemed to be equally deadly accuracy on the railway station and village, held by the Royal Berkshire Regiment, on our right; buildings could be seen collapsing in clouds of smoke. Our artillery at last replied to this fire, and then there commenced the most terrific artillery duel. The German artillery out-numbered ours by at least six to one, and, for every shell of ours that travelled over our heads from the guns behind us on its journey towards the German batteries, at least six came back. Until dark shells were perpetually travelling over our heads; there was not a moment's respite. The same thing was taking place further to our left; shells could be seen bursting all over the conical hills surrounding Mons; the booming of guns became an unbroken roar, and the rattle of distant musketry was distinctly audible. I already began to doubt the statement in F.S. Regulations that "a preliminary artillery duel will rarely take place in modern warfare." During the whole of this time no shell burst near any of the trenches held by the Battalion. Only the arrival of darkness put an end to the shell fire.

Artillery Fire at Mons.

I learnt afterwards that, in spite of being so heavily out-numbered, our artillery succeeded in giving a good account of itself, and, by the use of alternative positions, avoided serious loss. The Royal Berkshires, who, we imagined, must have suffered so severely, had very few casualties.

Soon after our arrival at Harmignies, aeroplanes appeared on the scene, and the little pamphlets with which we had been supplied, giving the types of friendly and hostile planes, were consulted; and we decided that most of them were German. During the bombardment aeroplanes were perpetually hovering aloft, and we saw for the first time an aeroplane under shell fire—a most inspiring sight. The aeroplane in question was a Frenchman proceeding in the direction of the German lines. We were watching its progress when four shells burst

Digitized by Google

in a group, one, two, three, four balls of smoke, quite close behind the aeroplane. The sound of the explosions could be heard quickly following. The aeroplane never deviated from its course. Again, another burst of four, this time perilously close, and the aeroplane dipped quickly—for a moment I thought it had been hit, but no, for a moment later, it proceeded serenely on. The next bursts were wider and wider of the mark, and the aeroplane disappeared in the distance. The sight of aeroplanes under artillery fire was to be a daily occurrence for the future, and I never ceased to marvel at the pluck and coolness of the pilots.

At about 11 p.m. a very vigorous night attack developed on our left, and continued for about an hour. Machine guns could be heard unceasingly, and spent bullets came over our trench. The attack was, apparently, along the summit of the spur, and, when firing suddenly ceased, we wondered whether the Germans had penetrated the line or been driven back. At 12 o'clock the Germans brought up a searchlight, and, for the remainder of the night, it traversed slowly up and down our trenches, keeping us awake all night, expecting an attack at any moment. There was another tremendous burst of machine gun fire from the same direction as the first before dawn, and it ended with the same abruptness. A dull red glow from the burning ricks, set alight by shell fire, lit up the spur on our left.

THE GREAT RETREAT FROM MONS.

MONDAY, 24th AUGUST:

Early in the morning we received the order to retire, via Aulnois, in the direction of Harveng, following the Royal Berkshire Regiment. A 6 p.m. we received our baptism of fire. There was a tremendous whistling, a loud explosion, and a hail of bullets over our heads. Another shell followed, just short of our trench. The gunners had a splendid bracket, one over and one under, and we expected to get a hot time of it. To our surprise, and for some unknown reason, probably a good target elsewhere, we never received another shell. At 7 p.m. the Germans advanced in extended order over the spur, and in the direction of the village held by the Berkshires. Our guns immediately came into action against them, and, temporarily, drove them back. Soon afterwards our guns retired, and dense masses of Germans, at least four Brigades, could be seen advancing, but out of infantry range. We had no news of the Berkshires, and, judging the time of retirement to have arrived, Captain Savage galloped over to their position. He found that the Berkshires had retired, and that the position was held by some of our cavalry, who were just leaving. We had to clear out as quickly as possible, and we were so late

Digitized by Google

that our own cavalry opened fire on us for several minutes before realising their mistake. We were taken for German infantry advancing! Everyone was very despondent at having to retire, though I realise now that to remain would have meant annihilation.

The Company concentrated in the village of Harveng, where we found the remainder of the Battalion. The Transport had been ordered back and there was nothing to eat. Fortunately, I found myself with my platoon outside a Belgian hospital in charge of Nuns, who provided coffee and a large slice of bread and jam for the men. We were exceedingly weary, having had two forced marches, practically no sleep and little food for two days. Our retirement, without firing a shot, was bad for *morale*, and the heat was overpowering. It was very difficult to keep the men together and maintain march discipline; every man who fell out was bound to become a prisoner. We marched back for about 10 miles, pursued by shrapnel fire the whole way, finally evading pursuit and obtaining a short halt for water and rest. The men were parched with thirst. We were only allowed twenty minutes, after which we fell in and proceeded in the direction of Bavai.

The March to Bavai.

I shall never forget the march, the terrible heat, the feeling of disaster which one scarcely dared admit, even to oneself, the struggle to maintain march discipline and keep the men going at all, and the terrible sight of the villagers crying and rushing to pack their belongings, realising what our retirement meant. My spirits reached the lowest ebb when I heard some villagers who had shouted "*A Berlin!*" to us the day before, murmur "*A Londres*" when we passed. At 7.30 p.m. we arrived on the outskirts of Bavai, and halted in a field by the roadside, where we found, to our joy, the transports, cookers and food. After half an hour in which to eat the food we should have had for breakfast, we were told we had to go out and take up a position. Outposts were in front of us, and we moved out to take up a defensive line and entrench. There was no sleep again this night. My platoon was placed along the front edge of the garden of a small cottage. The cottage, fortunately, had a pump, and we drank our fill of water. An old man and his wife were the occupants; they were very kind, and offered us all they possessed, though they looked sorrowfully on when we dug up the fruits of their labours to make trenches and cut down their hedges to form communications. The old man repeatedly asked me if the Germans were coming, saying that, if they came, it would be for him and his wife "*la ruine.*" I tried to encourage him by saying that the Germans were still far off, but realised that he would have to leave. It seemed pitiful that the poor old man, who had

Digitized by Google

owned this little cottage for the greater part of his life, should not be allowed to live out his last few years in peace. The greater part of the night we worked hard, in spite of all fatigue, making excellent entrenchments with our supply of tools from the tool cart, and cutting down trees to clear the foreground with the very useful circular saws.

TUESDAY, 25th AUGUST:

Early in the morning distant guns could be heard, and they rapidly approached. The old man and his wife collected their few belongings, released the goat and let loose the rabbits, who, regardless of war's alarms, enjoyed the unwonted freedom of a run in the vegetable garden. Before they left, weeping bitterly, they, with great kindness, made us some coffee.

To our great delight the mail bags arrived, and were brought up with the rations into the trenches. I had a budget of letters and had the novel experience of reading my first letter since the War began under fire, for, by this time, the German Infantry was approaching and spent bullets were coming over. We were simply longing to have a smack at the Germans, and it appeared as if our desires were going to be gratified, when, to our horror and disgust, we were ordered to retire, without firing a shot, from the position which we had told the men was to be held to the last, and on the preparation of which we had wasted so much invaluable time for sleep. We retired, with the King's Liverpools on our left, mutually supporting each other, and the cavalry held off the enemy. We retired until we arrived at the corner of the forest of Mormal. Here we halted for half an hour, and General Davies, with the Brigade Staff, rode past. We proceeded on, marching through Pont sur Sambre, where the 5th Brigade remained, holding the bridge. Several times during the march, there were scares of Germans being in front of us, and, in the light of future events, it is probable that Uhlans were marching parallel to us through the forest, and some of their patrols really were seen. The march was very long, there were no regular halts and the pace was forced. Fortunately, a vast fleet of ambulances had been organised to follow the Column at Pont sur Sambre, and these were filled by the men who could no longer march and must, otherwise, have fallen into the hands of the enemy. By the time we arrived at Maroilles the troops had reached almost the last stages of fatigue, and I, personally, could scarcely stand—three nights with practically no sleep, marching all day and entrenching all night, were beginning to tell their inevitable tale. Our billets were dirty and insufficient, in the slummy part of the town, and the inhabitants were inclined to be difficult. It

Fatigued Troops reach Maroilles.

Digitized by Google

was an hour after our arrival before I could get my platoon fixed up and get away to find a billet for myself and the Officers of "A."

On our arrival in Maroilles we found that we had doubled back on to the mechanical transport, owing to the rapid shortening of the lines of communication. It was funny to see vast streams of motor lorries with the familiar names of Carter Patteson, Mitchell and Butler, etc., making their way out of town back to the new refilling point. Savage and I were just going off to look out for a billet, when, suddenly this stream of transport, so lately departed, came bucketing back into the town at a great rate, followed by streams of French inhabitants, crying "*Les Allemands ! Sauve qui peut.*" Could the Germans, then, have got behind us? At the cry of the Germans a most extraordinary thing happened; the men were out of their billets in a moment, with rifles and bayonets fixed, those who had been hardly able to put a foot to the ground and were quite exhausted among them. They rushed out over the bridge leading to the south of the town, absolutely mad, after all they had been through, to get at the enemy, and it was with the greatest difficulty that they were brought under control. A party of French Cavalry narrowly escaped a burst of fire—the men were only just stopped in time. In the end the General arrived on the scene, and stated that the whole affair was a scare, but there can be no doubt that some cavalry patrol of the enemy must have slipped through. We returned to the town, several extra guards were posted, and we continued our search. In the end we had a great find, consisting of a very nice house with a most kind Frenchman and an English wife. We were invited to come in and wash, and they prepared a meal for us. I managed to obtain my valise, washed and changed my clothing, and sat down to an excellent meal. This we had scarcely begun when the order to "fall in" was received, and we heard the sound of guns. The Germans were upon us. We learnt from the Commanding Officer that the situation was, indeed, critical; the Germans had seized the bridge over the river leading into the town, and we were in imminent danger of being cut off altogether. We stood to arms in the town and were ordered to jettison our packs, it being realised that the men were quite immobile with them. We stored all ours in a little hut, where, doubtless, the Germans afterwards found them.(1) The transport was moving about in different directions all night, and we held all approaches into the town itself. Ultimately

Scare at Maroilles.

(1) The discovery of these cast away packs by the British soldiers in this retreat was used as a pretext by the Germans to prove that we had stored these in Belgium previous to the outbreak of the war !

Digitized by Google

the transport managed to slip away under cover of darkness and without escort, after, I believe, a false convoy had been sent out to decoy the enemy. A tremendous battle was raging at Landrecies, the next village on the left, and, if the Guards' Brigade were driven out, all would be lost. The Berkshires were sent out to try and recapture the seized bridge, but the Germans had mounted a field gun firing with fuse at zero, and the attack failed, after several very costly attempts. I was sent with my platoon to hold the road leading into the town from this bridge, and the Berkshire wounded were carried through me on stretchers—a depressing sight. I heard a strange story of their encounter. They met a party of Germans in the darkness when moving towards their bridge. A German Officer called out in French, "I am commanding a French patrol and wish to speak to your Officer." Major Turner stepped forward and was promptly riddled with bullets. The same kind of thing occurred at Landrecies, where the Germans approached singing the Marseillaise.(1) I shall never forget the fatigue of that night. I was obliged to remain standing the whole time to avoid falling off to sleep, and several times went to sleep standing and crashed to the ground.

The Fight at Landrecies. German Treachery.

At dawn the Brigade succeeded in withdrawing from the town, and immediately we had left shells poured into the Market Square. In Maroilles, a German, disguised as a French Staff Officer, succeeded in entering the Brigade Headquarters. He was, fortunately, discovered, and, I believe, subsequently shot.

WEDNESDAY, 26th AUGUST:

We marched in the direction of Marbaix, expecting to be shelled at any moment, and, to our great delight, met the French, who had been sent out to help us. Our spirits revived, and we turned right handed, marching to a place named the Grand Fayt, where we began to take up a position.

Retreat Continued.

Our Brigade had a halt of two hours, which we spent in washing and much more badly needed sleep. We were fallen in again and led to understand that we were to be taken a little way back and placed in Reserve. We imagined at last we were to be allowed to put up a fight. Our short march proved to be the longest we had yet experienced. We went on marching through Priches, Barzy, Etreux, until, eventually, we arrived at Venerolles at dusk, passing, on the way, the Guards' Brigade, who had retired from Landrecies and were taking up position. We went straight out on out-

Venerolles.

(1) This refers to a German attack on the 3rd Coldstream Guards, who here received their baptism of fire.

Digitized by Google

posts, and it poured with rain, settling in for a thoroughly wet night. We lay out, soaked to the skin, but no physical discomfort could have kept us awake. We slept for four delicious hours. We now know that at this time the 2nd Corps were still fighting desperately to hold the Le Cateau line.(1)

THURSDAY, 27th AUGUST:

We marched off at 7 a.m. in the direction of Guise, proceeding very slowly at first. I lost my sword, but did not mind—I had meant to dispose of a useless incumbrance in any case.

The conviction that we were running away began to make itself felt; even the arrival of the French did not seem to have checked our retreat. It must be remembered that, since the beginning of the Battle of Mons, we knew absolutely nothing, operation orders were unknown, and we were never told anything. Forced marches were of daily occurrence, and we never knew where we were going to nor why; we were undergoing most terrible privations and fatigue, without sleep, completely in the dark, and without being permitted to turn and show fight. That the Army survived such a terrible test of *morale* is a marvel. The men were absolutely wonderful.

Army Morale Tested.

Savage's whistle became a nightmare; it had a peculiar mournful note, and we dreaded the sound of it and the command to fall in and carry on marching, which invariably followed.

During the march "A" Company acted as right flank guard, holding successive flank positions, while the vast columns and lines of transport proceeded slowly along the roads, visible in the valley below. When we finally were withdrawn, we found ourselves some distance behind our own Brigade, and we followed after the 4th (Guards') Brigade, and a portion of a Field Ambulance, which had got lost. A German Taube passed over the road and the whole Brigade opened fire on it from column of route, without bringing it down. For some time we were treading empty cartridge cases into the ground.

Leaving Guise on our left, we pushed on along the delightful valley, and, late in the evening, came into bivouac at Mont D'origny, where the whole Division were concentrated. The heights around were held by outposts. We here heard that the Germans were following hard on our heels in vast convoys of motor lorries, and were reported at St. Quentin. Where,

(1) The 1st Corps were too far away to help Sir H. Smith Dorrien. The 2nd Division was scattered over a wide area, the 5th Brigade was about 15 miles away from Le Cateau, and the South Staffords at least 10 miles distant.

Digitized by Google

then, were the troops of the 2nd Army Corps? Could they have been cut off?

Owing to the possibility of our bivouac being shelled, as soon as it was dark, we moved our bivouac several yards and placed the men in a cut cornfield in small groups, spaced to mitigate loss, I judged our position to be none too secure, especially when "C" Company was sent to hold the village of —— on our line of retreat. We made very comfortable beds in the cut corn and slept peacefully until 3 a.m., when we were ordered to fall in.

The column was some time in getting under way, owing to the blocking of the roads by transport, and we were able to obtain a cup of tea with a dash of rum, before starting. At these early hours, even in the summer, there was a nip in the air, and the fine nights usually ended in a heavy dew.

FRIDAY, 28th AUGUST:

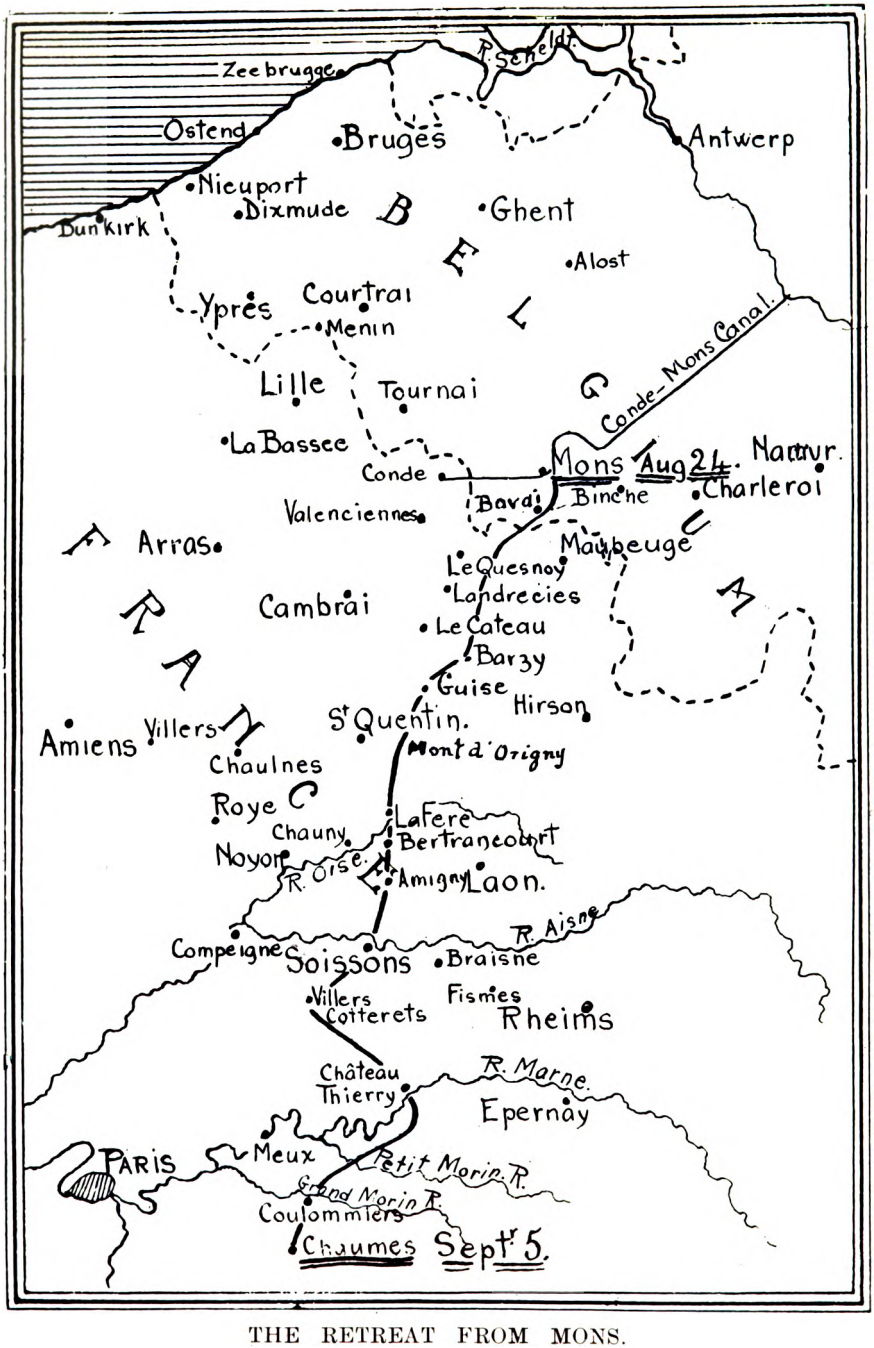
We had a very long march towards the fortress of La Fère, and rumours were current that we were to be placed in Reserve for a rest under cover of the fortress. These rumours seemed to be confirmed when we entered La Fère almost dead beat, and the Brigade Major came along the line giving the Officers the welcome news that there was to be no more retiring.

At La Fère.

We halted in an orchard outside La Fère for two hours at about 12 noon, and had dinner. General French came round and personally addressed each unit. He told us he had never been prouder of being a British soldier, and that the Army had saved the French from annihilation, after having undergone the most terrible test an Army could experience.

We cheered him heartily on his departure, and everyone felt much better; after all we had done something, and everything pointed to a turn in the tide. We moved on again at 2 p.m., marching 6 kilometres (almost as much as the men could stand) into a nice little village of Amigny, where we were put into billets. Our spirits revived some. Never had we been in such need of rest; General French had told us that something had been indeed accomplished, something done, and the well-earned night's repose between clean sheets under a roof, to say nothing of a good dinner, was in full view. The dinner was a great success. Captain Savage and myself were in one cottage; Rutherford, Limbery and Scott in another, and we were just going to turn in, when there was an ominous knock at the door—an Orderly summoning Savage to Headquarters. I went with him there, and we heard the trying news that "A" Company had to proceed out at once to hold

Digitized by Google



THE RETREAT FROM MONS.

MAP 3.

To face p. 256

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

the bridge at Condren. I went back to turn out the others. I found them with long-drawn and contented sighs, two in one bed, one in another, just tucking themselves in. It was some time before I could convince them that I was not pulling their legs, and when they finally realised that they really had to turn out their language was unprintable! We marched off in profane silence, led by a guide, to the mill at Condren. A man had hysterics on the way. There we knocked loudly on the door, and a frightened female, after a long time, cautiously poked a dishevelled head through an upstairs window. She evidently thought that the Germans, and with them her last hour, had come, and we were implored to spare her. When she finally found out who we were, her relief was great. and the mill was placed at our disposal. It was a large building, denuded of furniture, evidently the country cottage of some well-to-do man, who had left, taking everything of value, and leaving caretakers in charge when war was declared. Attached to the mill there were farm buildings, cowsheds and a large rabbitry, all well-tenanted. Captain Savage quickly decided on his plan for defence, and we were soon digging trenches, and preparing the buildings for a protracted resistance. We had little sleep that night, and envied the remainder of the Battalion in comfort at Amigny.(1)

At Amigny.

SATURDAY, 29th AUGUST:

In the morning patrols were sent out and the defences improved. Our field of view was not very extensive, but sentries were posted on the top of buildings with field glasses to guard against surprise. There were two bridges to defend, and the mill and buildings were on an island between them. Our defences were mostly on the island, and consisted of field entrenchments and loop-holed walls. The defence of the post was a very interesting problem, and I took the opportunity during the day of making a sketch of the position. We had our meals in the mill, cooked by the housekeeper, and there was plenty of milk, butter, eggs and wine. We discovered to our surprise that the establishment boasted a bath room, and we retired in turn to wallow. It is true the water was cold, but what of it? We were more than glad to get rid of ten days' grime. In the middle of the day a patrol brought in two supposed spies—an old man and woman. We questioned them, and receiving unsatisfactory replies, Savage decided to send them in to Headquarters. My efforts to blindfold the woman caused considerable amusement. Nothing would convince her that she was not going to be led off to be shot without further ado. First she pulled the

(1) One Platoon of "D" Company was sent to entrench the road from Sinceny.

Digitized by Google

bandage down and peeped under, then she pushed it up and reversed the process. I felt very sorry for her, especially as she was probably innocent of anything but curiosity. In the afternoon an R.E. Officer came to see Savage and proceeded to prepare the forward bridge for demolition. He also gave us the unwelcome news that orders for a retirement would, probably, be soon received. During the night we were hastily called out by the R.E., the bridge was to be blown up at once, and the men were to be moved clear. As a matter of fact, we were not clear when the order was given, and I was very nearly blown sky high.(1)

SUNDAY, 30th AUGUST:

Retirement Continued to Coucy-le-Chateau.

The order to retire was received early, and at 6 a.m. the Company marched off in the direction of Amigny, where we joined the Battalion. Marching via Ambleny through thick woods, we eventually, late in the day, passed Coucy-le-Chateau, and halted near a railway crossing. It was terribly hot, there was no water to be obtained, and we were thoroughly tired. After nearly an hour's halt, we turned back on our tracks, and went into bivouac in a field near Coucy-le-Chateau. We made fairly comfortable beds in the straw, supplemented by hay, from a small stack, but there was none too much room, and once during the night we were nearly walked on by some nocturnal wanderer.

MONDAY, 31st AUGUST:

After a hasty breakfast in the dark, we marched off at 4 a.m., in the direction of Soissons. We had our first experience of paved roads, and I was glad I had no nails in my boots. It was desperately hot, and we were unable to get water. Our spirits were not stimulated by the sight of thousands of refugees in country carts, carrying all they possibly could with them, women, old men, and young children. I saw, I am sorry to say, the maid from the house of Mme. Picquart at Iron, and must confess I looked the other way. Eventually we arrived thoroughly done up, at Soissons, and crossed the bridge over the Aisne, which was ready for demolition. We halted on the other side for some time alongside the river, and managed to get a wash. A man in the King's Liverpool Regiment stripped and went for a swim. When in the middle of the river, he was seized with cramp, and was drowned; his body was not recovered. Whilst we were halted, vast bodies of French troops crossed the bridge. At 2 p.m. we continued our march, and arrived, late in the evening, at St. Baudry, where we bivouaced in a field at the

(1) This bridge carried the road from Oussy, N.W. of La Fère, to Amigny, across the river Oise.

Digitized by Google

foot of a hill. I went off scouting for food, and managed to obtain some eggs. It is a most extraordinary thing that in times of exhaustion and privation food becomes the only joy. Meals are the "Be all and the end all" here, the only thing worth living for. We had scarcely time to eat our eggs when we were ordered to move, and we climbed up a precipitous hill along a sunken road, which had to be negotiated in single file. On the summit we went on outposts, No. 1 and 2 platoons finding the pickets. The night was disturbed by perpetual alarms, and machine gun firing could be heard in the distance. I only had about one hour's sleep.(1)

TUESDAY, 1st SEPTEMBER:

We were on the move again by 3 a.m. (when again should we have a good night's rest?) and marched towards Villers Cotterets. The country was alternatively woody and open, and the sun was blazing hot. We passed the Guards' Brigade on the way taking up a position and entrenching. At about 3 o'clock in the afternoon we halted on the outskirts of a very large wood, and lay down in the shade. The news came through that the Guards' Brigade were being heavily engaged. After about an hour; the march was continued for about 1 kilometre into the wood, and a further halt was made. The Guards' Brigade showing unmistakable signs of the fierceness of the action, came through us, and we were ordered to turn about and take up the duty of rear guard. About this time a Battery of R.F.A. on the outskirts of the wood was so heavily shelled that retirement was impossible, and the Brigade was ordered out to save the guns. The Commanding Officer called up all the Officers to the edge of the wood from where the Battery could be seen, and gave out instructions. Our position was by no means safe, shrapnel bursting in front, and the bullets were whistling round, making a terrible noise in the trees. "A" Company, led by Captain Savage, advanced towards some high ground, to draw off the enemy's fire from the Battery, and also to deny the ground to the enemy's advancing infantry. Shells burst all around us, and the ground was ploughed up with bullets. We advanced as far as possible immediately after a burst and minimised loss. I took my platoon, gradually dwindling owing to casualties, forward on to the railway embankment and waited there with Captain Duckworth and a portion of "D" Company. We had a hot time of it there from shell fire, and, although machine guns opened fire, we could not discover the opposing infantry. The diversion we had caused enabled the gun teams to gallop up and get the guns away. A finer sight I never wish to see;

Rearguard Actions at Villers Cotterets.

Saving the Guns.

(1) The casualties of the 2nd Battalion from the 23rd to 29th August were:—Other ranks, 17 missing.

Digitized by Google

midst hails of shrapnel the teams hooked in and drove off at the gallop, only one limber was lost, and the Gunner-Major yelled to Savage as he passed—"You have saved my guns." Having accomplished our object, we retired, carrying our wounded with us, and regained the cover of the wood.(1) The excitement and fatigue of the action made everyone very thirsty, and most of the water bottles were empty. We reformed in the wood, and continued our march late into the night, finally bivouacing in a clover field outside an orchard at Thury-en-Valois, and sleeping in corn taken from a neighbouring stack.

WEDNESDAY, 2nd SEPTEMBER:

We had very little sleep again, breakfasted at 2.30, and were on the march by 3. We marched and marched all day, and did not arrive at our destination until 7 p.m., after dark. Trilbardon was the name of the place, and the Battalion were bivouaced in the grounds of the most delightful old chateau on the banks of the Marne. The Officers found beds in the chateau itself, where Brigade Headquarters also were. There was an icy cold fountain in the grounds, at which we slaked our intolerable thirst. The inhabitants of the chateau had fled, and we explored the bedrooms and pegged out our claims for beds. This done, Townshend and I wandered into the cellars, and I looted two bottles of wine. We soothed our consciences by persuading ourselves that had the owners been there they would have been only too glad to press them upon us. We were just settling down to sleep, after a good wash, the time for which we, subsequently, grudged, and thinking of the joys of a morning swim in the river, when the Adjutant came round with orders for a move at 2 a.m. We dropped off to sleep cursing inwardly.

Bivouac at Trilbardon.

THURSDAY, 3rd SEPTEMBER:

We marched off in the dark, as ordered, and passed through Meaux, where the bridges had been blown up.

Ten miles beyond Meaux we halted, and the whole of the 2nd Division was concentrated off the road in an open space. The 6th Brigade then moved on about two miles and halted for two hours in an orchard attached to a farmhouse. With considerable difficulty and with rather doubtful water, the men's bottles were filled, and we were refreshed by gifts of fruit. The 1914 fruit season was a record one, and we had had, and we continued to have, many occasions to congratulate ourselves on the fact during the retreat. Our diet of bully and biscuits could almost always be varied by pears and

(1) Casualties in this action were:—Other ranks, 1 killed, 26 wounded, 34 missing.

Digitized by Google

apples, and the abundance of fruit helped to mitigate the terrible difficulties of maintaining the water supply. We were, however, careful to prevent any wholesale looting of orchards, and confined our attentions to the windfalls. Those inhabitants who had not fled were only too ready to offer us all they possessed, but it was bad enough for them to have to bear a German occupation, without our adding to their difficulties by taking away one of their few means of subsistance. After a long march we arrived at the farm of Bilbardeau-les-vannes, and the Division bivouaced in cut corn fields in the neighbourhood. The corn made a comfortable enough bed, but in other respects the bivouac was none too good. There was practically no drinking water, and only a small village washing pool of a pattern that can be seen all over the country for ablutions. The water in the pool soon became like pea soup, and a duck pond, requisitioned for the same purpose, when thoroughly stirred, became so unsavoury that Scott and I decided to remain dirty.(1)

Retreat Continued.

FRIDAY, 4th SEPTEMBER:

After quite a good night's rest, we remained in the same bivouac for the greater part of the day; the rest was most welcome, but the heat of the sun was rather trying, and we had to build up the straw to obtain what little shade we could. About this time we first obtained a glimmering of the strategical situation; it was said that the Germans had turned off from Paris, were trying to drive in a wedge near Meaux, and, in so doing, were gradually placing themselves within three sides of a square to our great advantage. In the evening we were moved out of bivouac to take up a position. "A" Company being detailed as escort for guns. This we had scarcely done when the order to retire came along, and as we departed, we saw German shrapnel bursting over our former position. We moved on, continuing our retreat until after dark, and were finally halted at 7 p.m. and bivouaced in an orchard at Voisins on the right of the main road to Coulommiers. Our first reinforcements arrived here in charge of Yeo, and made us up to strength. During the night there was a good deal of firing in the outpost line not far from us; keeping us on the *qui vive*.

Von Kluck's Fatal Movement.

SATURDAY, 5th SEPTEMBER:

At 4 a.m., the Battalion fell in and continued the retreat. A very long march with regular halts (a welcome change) brought us at noon to the township of Chaumes. Many refugees were passed on the road, and when we arrived, "A"

(1) The Battalion had now retired S.E. of Paris, and continued the retreat across the Marne to Coulommiers.

Digitized by Google

End of the Retreat. Chaumes.

Company was sent on a little way to occupy a hill commanding the bivouac. After an hour we were withdrawn and went into bivouac with the remainder of the Battalion. There was a stream near, and I managed to make some sort of a bath. The night was very cold, there was not much straw, and, unable to sleep, I went off foraging and brought back a few extra trusses. In the morning I found to my disgust that during the night the baggage waggons had turned up, and my valises had been lying idle the whole night whilst I was perishing with cold. I got a pair of ammunition boots from the Quartermaster, the pair I had been wearing were falling off and the new pair in my valise were no use to feet swollen by the incessant marching in the heat of the Summer.(1)

SUNDAY, 6th SEPTEMBER:

At last the turning point had been reached, and, instead of continuing our endless retreat, we turned on our tracks and marched towards the enemy at 5 in the morning. The news was good, the three sides of the square were closing on the enemy. A short march was followed by a halt in an orchard, Divisional Headquarters were close to us, and the 6th Brigade were Divisional Reserve.

British aeroplanes ascended and landed in a field near, bringing in reports, whilst we were halted. It was the first time we had seen the Union Jack on the under side of the wings, though we were quite used to seeing the concentric circles of the Frenchmen and the Black Cross of the enemy planes. At 4 in the afternoon we went forward a few kilometres, and bivouaced outside Chateau de la Fontaine; guns could be heard and seen in the distance.

Rutherford's platoon acted as escort to the Divisional Heavy Guns during the night, and a German Staff Officer who had gone astray in a motor car was captured with his chauffeur. Savage and I explored the fruit gardens of the Chateau, and filled our haversacks with specimen fruit from standard trees.

MONDAY, 7th SEPTEMBER:

In the early morning we moved into the gardens of the Chateau, and lay under the trees—two Guardsmen killed in the action of the day before lay buried there (I wonder how the owners will like their park being used as a cemetery when they return).

---

(1) This place, Chaumes, marks the furthest westerly point in the retirement from Belgium. Between the dates August 21st and September 5th, both inclusive, the 6th Brigade marched a distance of 236 miles in 16 days, with only one day's halt during this period, the average number of miles marched per day being 15.7.

Digitized by Google

The Brigade was still in reserve, and fighting was going on ahead, evidently successfully, for at 11.30 we marched on slowly and with frequent halts, passing German prisoners on the way. At 7 p.m., we arrived at St. Simeon, finding the remainder of the Division there and bivouacing in a field near a wood. There was plenty of straw, and we were able to get the water bottles filled. I must say up to date the water carts had not been a success, they took very long to fill and the pumps were always breaking. Had the R.A.M.C. instructions only to use water from the carts been strictly carried out, I am afraid, ere this, we would all have perished from thirst.

TUESDAY, 8th SEPTEMBER:

We left at 7 a.m. The Guards Brigade were advance guard and had some stiff fighting with the enemy, who were finally driven back, leaving prisoners, machine guns and baggage in our hands. We saw the first dead Germans of the campaign on our march. An old French woman, who held the head of a German officer up to view, cackling with glee, as we passed afforded a gruesome incident. I pictured to myself some ancestress of hers knitting under the guillotine during the Revolution. In the late evening we arrived near the River Marne, and bivouaced in rather a salient position behind the river at La Pierre. There was plenty of straw again, and the Officers of "A" Company "mucked-in" and kept warm. One unfortunate man was trodden on by a loose pack horse during the night.

Battle of the Marne.

WEDNESDAY, 9th SEPTEMBER:

We were on the move at 4 a.m., and passed several batteries of Field Artillery taking up position with a view to covering the forcing of the river. They did not have to open fire, as the Germans had fled, leaving the bridge at Charly for some unknown reason intact. It was evidently the original intention of the enemy to dispute the crossing, for the houses were loop-holed, and there were barricades in the street. German writing was chalked on the houses where the enemy had billeted, and we saw many evidences of the hurried nature of their retirement. The doors of houses were open, and inside was chaos: chairs overturned, tables crowded with empty bottles and unfinished food, and mattresses and straw dragged out on to the ground floors to provide sleeping accommodation. Charly and the villages on the road presented a pitiable sight: houses were burnt, and looted, and their contents scattered everywhere.

Charly sur Marne.

Empty bottles were strewn along the line of march, and during our progress the next few days through the champagne country we invariably found this tell-tale sign of the march of German columns. After passing Charly, the Brigade took

Digitized by Google

up the *rôle* of advanced guard, and proceeded through rather woody country. Rumours of a German ambush proved to be abortive, and, after a long halt near a splendid mountain stream, we went on to Coupru, and "A" and "C" Companies were sent on Outposts. During the night a French Cuirassier came through the Lines, and gave us information of the success of the French at Chateau Thierry, where there had been severe fighting. We could see the lights of a Cavalry Brigade bivouaced in front of us.

THURSDAY, 10th SEPTEMBER:

We continued the advance, the 6th Brigade again acting as advanced guard. At Hautevesnes the enemy were encountered in position, and they put up a good fight. The whole Division was deployed for attack, but "A" and "C" Companies were held in reserve by the Brigadier. Our Artillery made very good shooting, and under cover of their fire the Infantry got home, taking about 300 prisoners. The Germans had no artillery against our particular section of attack, and, in the light of subsequent events, it seems very probable that the troops we encountered were a strong rear-guard given instructions to hold on until the last, and delay our advance at all costs to enable the Aisne position to be prepared. At the end of the attack there was a very unfortunate incident. Owing to the rain, many of the men were wearing ground sheets, which have a bluish colour, and, when they seized the summit of the position held by the enemy, they were taken for Germans and fired on by a battery of R.H.A. Several were killed, including the Adjutant of the Royal Berkshires. After the fight, in which we lost about 20 killed and wounded, including Captain R. Duckworth and Lieut. E. R. Birch (wounded), "A" and "C" Companies were given the unpleasant task of burying the dead and collecting valuables, rifles, and equipment. We had an opportunity of seeing the effect of lyddite, and it must be admitted that it was very effective. The bodies were, in most cases, deprived of some limb, and nearly all the dead were killed by shell fire. The identity discs of the dead, and all valuables and papers were sent in to Headquarters, the rifles, ammunition and equipment were either buried or burnt. Our task completed, we returned to the Battalion, who had marched on a few kilometres to Chevillon, and bivouaced there. Once more a bed of straw, but not so comfortable as usual, the reason being that I did not discover in the dark that the straw was rye. I was scratching most of the next day![1]

Crossing the Marne.

(1) This marked the end of the Battle of the Marne.

Digitized by Google

FRIDAY, 11th SEPTEMBER:

We left at 5 a.m., and continued our advance, unopposed by the enemy, under a cloudy sky. The weather up to date had been absolutely marvellous. With the exception of the night at Venerolle,(1) there had not been a drop of rain since the famous thunderstorm at Havre.(2) In view of the amount of sleeping in the open we had to do, it was very lucky. We were now to have a change, and by noon the rain came down in torrents. My Burberry was most unsatisfactory, the water quickly came through, and the collar acted as a funnel, collecting the water and pouring it down my neck. When we arrived at Cugny, everyone was soaked, and the prospect of a night in the rain was not entrancing. Fortunately a farm was found at Wallee, with barns attached sufficient to house, at a pinch, the whole Battalion, and it did not take long to get under cover. There was scarcely room for the men to lie down all together, but we realised the truth of the old saying,—"The worst billet is better than the best bivouac," with the rain teeming down.

The Advance to the Aisne.

The Officers crowded into the farm house, and dried their clothes in front of a roaring log fire. We had an excellent meal, and were glad to sit round a table for a change. The bill of fare was supplemented with excellent butter and jam provided by the farmer and his wife. A good hot stew and plenty of wine sent us happy to bed, leaving our coats to dry in front of the fire. I shared a bed with Townshend, and the sound of the guns in the distance did not disturb us one atom. What a luxury a bed can be!

SATURDAY, 12th SEPTEMBER:

At 4.30 we fell in while it was still dark, and marched on to Braine, where there were evidences of fighting. The advanced guard of Protective Cavalry had managed to evict the enemy without Infantry support, and there were many dead and wounded Germans along the road. Braine was defended by barricades, and the houses were loop-holed, but the enemy had not held out for long. The Germans when they departed left a few snipers behind to pick off officers, which having done, they surrendered. Needless to say, they were immediately shot. We halted at the foot of a hill for some time, and I saw an unexploded German shell. Whilst we were waiting, the rain came on and soaked us again. In the end, we climbed the road running up the hill between thick woods, and were billeted in a very large farm house, "Montaussart Farm," on the plateau at the summit. It was a huge farm and the whole Brigade was crowded under cover

(1) This was Wednesday, August 26th.
(2) August 15th.

Digitized by Google

at the expense of the cattle in the stables. The difficulty of wedging men in anywhere in the confusion of the darkness may be left to the imagination, and my electric torch ran out. The Officers shared a barn with the Officers of the 60th, and the first parcel post arrived. Tobacco and the *Times*, both very welcome, were my portion.

SUNDAY, 13th SEPTEMBER:

The weather was fine, but cloudy, when we moved out of our billet at 4 a.m. We halted for most of the day two miles away from the farm house, and could hear the sound of a heavy engagement in front. The Headquarters of the 1st Army Corps and 2nd Division were established near us, and several aeroplanes landed close at hand to deliver messages. The 5th Brigade were heavily engaged, forcing the crossing of the River Aisne five miles ahead of us, and, when they had accomplished their task with the assistance of the R.E. pontoons (all bridges had been blown up), we continued our advance and billeted in a village called Viel d'Arcy. On our way there, we passed a battery of heavy guns in action against the Germans retreating over the high ground on the other side of the river valley. As far as the eye could see to the right and to the left clouds of smoke indicated the bursting of English and French shells along the crest of the high ground on the far side of the Aisne.

The Battle of the Aisne.

"A" Company were sent on Outposts, and took up an extended line facing the river. There was little danger as the 5th Brigade had established themselves North of the river, and were holding the line Soupir—Moussy—Bourg. The first Division also managed to get a Brigade across, which continued the line to the right, and was in touch with the French. During the night, in a wood near one of the piquets, we discovered one of the strange caves which are characteristic of the district. It was inhabited by an old man and his wife, who were in bed, and very startled when my electric torch flashed in their faces. This was the first day of the Battle of the Aisne.

MONDAY, 14th SEPTEMBER:

Early in the morning the 6th Brigade moved forward from Viel d'Arcy towards the River Aisne, crossing by a bridge which, strangely enough, was still intact. The Canal joining the Aisne and the Oise runs parallel to the river at this point and it was the bridge over the Canal which had been blown up. The 6th Brigade crossed by means of the R.E. pontoon bridge, which had been constructed under heavy fire the day before, and halted immediately the other side near Pont d'Arcy village, in an open space surrounded by woods, where the transport also was parked as soon as it had been brought

Crossing the Aisne.

Digitized by Google

over. Whilst halted, news reached us of the progress of the 1st Division, who had pressed forward on our right, but were now checked by the enemy.

It was evidently the intention of the General Staff to push the enemy out of their position, which was on the high ground North of the Aisne, and to continue our victorious advance of the preceding week. I wonder if anyone realised what the true situation was. We were actually in a position of great danger. Our advanced troops were holding the first slopes of the high ground North of the river; we had the whole of our force across the river and no reserve to cover a possible retirement; the Germans were still holding the summit of the high ground, with no mere rearguard, but the whole of their strength backed by siege guns intended for Paris; and they were only waiting for the critical moment, *i.e.* when we had committed ourselves by crossing all our troops over the river, to launch a counter-attack with all their strength. **Battle of the Aisne.**

Had this move been successful and the troops holding on to the foot hills been driven in, we should have been placed in the very difficult position of having to effect a retirement in a valley over a river and a canal, both of which were unfordable and with few bridges, and those commanded and easily destroyed by the hostile artillery. We obtained the first inkling of the true situation when an enormous high explosive shell, the first "Black Maria," burst within fifty yards of the transport. The men said, "What the —— are our guns doing firing at us," and the Officers did not disillusion them. There was not a moment to lose; we got on the move at once; the Brigade advanced and the transport was moved into Pont d'Arcy village for concealment.

The situation of our Division (the 2nd) at this moment was as follows:—The Guards Brigade (4th), which had crossed near Soupir, was advancing up the ridge North of that village; the 5th Brigade, which had been holding the long line Soupir —Moussy—Bourg the night before, had been moved off to the right and was advancing on a line extending from the Beaulne Spur to the right and in touch with the 1st Division, and the 6th Brigade, our Brigade, was hurried up into the village of Moussy, from whence we deployed to advance in the interval. The 6th Brigade came into action as follows:—The Royal Berkshires were sent forward along the valley, between the Soupir Spur and Beaulne Ridge, where the canal lies. The King's supported by two Companies of the South Staffords, "C" and "B" Companies, advanced through woods along the Beaulne Spur, and the 60th remained in the village of Moussy. **Critical Situation.**

The King's met with strong opposition and lost very heavily from the German machine guns, which were very well handled

Digitized by Google

in the woods. "C" and "B" Companies also lost men, and the shell fire was so heavy that they were forced to retire with the King's and dig themselves in, leaving many casualties behind. The Guards Brigade on the Soupir Ridge had a similar experience. The Berkshires pushed forward with great gallantry up the valley, and twice got on to the high ground at Braze. Each time they were forced to retire by the very heavy shell fire. Owing to the failure of the Guards Brigade and King's Regiment to make any headway along the Spurs on either side of the valley, the Berkshires were very badly enfiladed whenever they pushed forward. During the greater part of the day "A" and "D" Companies were placed on a road leading out of Moussy, ready to support the other Companies of the Battalion on the Beaulne Spur. A battery of Field Artillery was in position above the road on our right, and we were let in for a good deal of the enemy's artillery fire in consequence.

Battle of the Aisne.

The Company ("A" Company) at one time was moved out behind the Beaulne Spur, but before we could advance the news of the King's retirement was received, and the whole Battalion was withdrawn from the firing line to form a reserve.

"B" and "C" Companies were placed in cellars in Moussy, and "A" and "D" Companies went back to their old position on the road.

At dusk "A" Company was sent forward to thicken the position of the Berkshires by occupying the ground between the Canal and the position held by the King's; we had a full account of the day's fighting from Lieut.-Colonel Graham of the Berkshires.

The Company had entrenched and were planning an attack on some barges up the Canal, which were reported occupied by Germans, when the order was received to march back to Moussy *via* Metz farm, and once more "A" and "D" Companies were sent out to the road. We dug ourselves in to the bank on the side of the road as far as was possible with the light entrenching tool, and spent a most uncomfortable night in the rain and mud. All night the enemy were launching counter-attacks, and the rattle of machine guns was incessant.

TUESDAY, 15th SEPTEMBER:

As soon as daylight came the enemy opened fire on us, or more probably the battery near us, with high explosive shells, and we had a very bad time of it all day, losing a great many men. The Officers had to turn themselves into R.A.M.C. orderlies, and spent most of their time tying up wounded. The stretcher bearers and Pte. Littlewood acted with great

Digitized by Google

gallantry in carrying away the wounded under heavy fire, and for his excellent work No. 6676 Pte. Littlewood was mentioned in despatches.

There is something very terrible in being shelled by guns several miles away in a position from which it is impossible to make use of the rifle. To have to sit still all day and wait for shells to come, is a great test of *morale*. There is no romance in sitting doing nothing and waiting to be blown sky high by a product of machinery. **Under Shell Fire at Moussy.**

The gunners on our right had a very bad time of it and the battery was silenced; every single horse in the gun team was hit, and there were no less than thirty dead horses lying around us. 2nd Lieut. G. J. Rutherford was very badly wounded by shrapnel, and 2nd Lieut. G. T. Miller by high explosive. Both were carried with the other wounded and placed in a barn in Moussy.

During the intervals in the firing the men went on digging (no encouragement to dig was necessary these days), and soon had almost hidden themselves in the bowels of the earth. An amusing incident, which enlivened one of the worst days I ever spent, was provided by the falling in of one of the "funk-holes" and the efforts of the interned men to struggle out through the mud.

In the evening the Company Cooker came and refreshed us with hot tea and bacon. Throughout the Aisne battle supplies were always brought up at night.

WEDNESDAY, 18th SEPTEMBER:

The greater part of the day was spent on the road with more shelling, and to add to our discomfort the horses began to smell horribly. The rain on the road had washed round the horses and wounded men and the pools were a sickening colour, suggesting butchers' shops.

In the evening, to our great delight, we were ordered to move to Soupir and support the Guards Brigade, who had been very seriously handled by the repeated German attacks. On our way across the valley we evidently came in view of some German observing station, and a battery of Field Artillery opened fire. Seven men were wounded and two killed. **Move to Support Guards Brigade.**

By the time we arrived, the situation at Soupir had cleared up and we were ordered to return to Moussy after dark. We marched back in safety, avoiding a burning hay rick which had been set alight by the artillery fire when we crossed before. (Two men were wounded on the return march.)

Digitized by Google

On our arrival at Moussy, "B" and "C" Companies were sent out on to the road, and "A" and "D" took their places in the cellars of the village. The Officers of "A" were billeted in the house of the Curé.

THURSDAY, 17th SEPTEMBER:

We had a very comfortable day in the Curé's house. He was a very nice old man, very tall and with a beard reminding me somewhat of Agrippa in "Struwelpeter." We admired him very much for sticking to his post when practically the whole village had been deserted. His sister, who acted as housekeeper, was absolutely typical. I imagine she knew every bean and grain of sugar she possessed, and was economy personified. Apparently during the shelling, when she and her brother always retired to the cellar, some R.A.M.C. Orderlies had entered the house and taken six of the Curé's shirts for the wounded. This event was far worse a calamity in her eyes than the war itself, and she rather annoyed us by walking about bemoaning and chanting "*Six chemises de Monsieur le Curé*" all day, regardless of the fact that the Curé was delighted to see the English newspapers, as the village had been cut off from all news for some time. In spite of the continuous shelling, the men in the cellars escaped unhurt.

At Moussy. What the Curé lost.

FRIDAY, 18th SEPTEMBER:

At 2 a.m. in the morning we were sleeping peacefully in the Curé's house; Scott and Limbery in one bed and Savage and myself in another; when the order to get ready to move came round. At 3 a.m. the Battalion was proceeding in the dark across the dangerous valley to Soupir, once more the threatened spot. On our arrival, we were fallen out at the side of the road and proceeded to cook breakfast. Our help was evidently not immediately required, for we spent the rest of the day and the night on the side of the road in the village.

At Soupir.

At nightfall we got some straw from neighbouring barns, which were full of Guardsmen in reserve to their Brigade, and made as comfortable beds as possible. During the night the rain came down in torrents, nothing could withstand it, and when thoroughly soaked Savage and I trekked off and managed to squeeze in under cover.(1)

SATURDAY, 19th SEPTEMBER:

Early in the morning Savage explored the village, and finding that there was room for the men under cover in some

(1) Other ranks :—3 wounded.

Digitized by Google

outhouses of a farm house, obtained permission of the C.O. to billet them there. The whole Battalion was soon under cover.

The Officers of "A" Company found a comfortable cottage, with an elderly man and an aged and partially disabled woman in possession. We washed and dried ourselves before the fire, and cooked our meals in peace as far as the German shells would let us. The old woman rather worried us; she had a nasty cough, and after we had given her rum as a soother she liked it so much that she went on coughing in the hopes of a second dose. I have so far omitted to mention George and Jean, the two French interpreters for the Battalion, who luckily were attached to "A" Company. They were most excellent fellows, and we were lucky in having had them with the Company the whole time. During the retreat they were kindness itself, and were always offering the Officers coffee and wines produced in some miraculous manner. While in this village they used their foraging powers to the best advantage, and we rarely had to fall back upon "Bully" for a meal. It was almost impossible to make them accept money for their purchases. One of them was a barrister and the other a schoolmaster, son of a French Count, both, of course, serving as simple *soldat*.

SUNDAY, 20th SEPTEMBER:

In the morning we were still in billets, but at about 2 p.m. a message came through that the Wiltshires had been driven out of their trenches at Chavonne and that two Companies were required to proceed there at once.

Help for the Wiltshires at Chavonne.

On our arrival, the Wiltshires' trenches were found to be empty, and the Germans could be seen in a wood close to them.

"A" Company was the first to move forward, and we very soon came under machine gun fire. Fortunately, there was a sunken road at hand, and we managed to escape loss, the bullets hitting the bank behind us.

Two squadrons of cavalry were occupying the interval between the Guards Brigade and the evacuated Wiltshire trenches, and Savage obtained all the information he could from the Officer in charge. He then proceeded to make a personal reconnaissance, and found a covered way by which he advanced two platoons close up to the wood where the Germans were. A volunteer was called for to take a message to the Wiltshires explaining the situation and asking them to make an advance simultaneously with "A" Company. Pte. Mutlow took the message, running great risk in doing so. As a result, an advance was made, supported by very accurate artillery fire from Chavonne, and the Germans were driven

Digitized by Google

back. The Wiltshires reoccupied their trenches and the Battalion was withdrawn again to Soupir.(1)

For this work Captain Savage was mentioned in despatches, and Pte. Mutlow received the D.C.M. The Battalion was thanked by the General Officer Commanding 7th Brigade and by our own Divisional General.(2) Lord Cavan, commanding the 4th (Guards) Brigade, sent the following message to Lieut.-Colonel C. S. Davidson:—

"BM/571. 21/9/14.

"To O.C. 2/S. Staffs.

"I cannot let you leave the 4th Brigade without expressing my sincere thanks and warm admiration.

I only hope the 4th Brigade may have a chance of rendering you same splendid assistance you have given us.

"CAVAN, B/Gen."

MONDAY, 21st SEPTEMBER:

At Soupir.

Soupir is a quaint little country village, dominated by a very fine Chateau, the property of the first wife of M. Calmette. We inspected the beautiful grounds of the Chateau, and thought of the woman who had given such dramatic evidence in the extraordinary trial which thrilled Paris such a short time ago; a trial producing revelations which in ordinary times would have shaken the French political world to its very foundations, but which vanished quickly into oblivion before the rapid march of international events and the gathering of the war cloud which burst and flooded Europe with such dramatic suddenness.

The Chateau was used as Brigade Headquarters by the Guards Brigade, and on a subsequent occasion by our own Brigade. The Headquarter Staff, I am told, in moments of relaxation, amused themselves by fishing for the tame carp in the ornamental lake. One Officer was thus engaged when a shell fell into the water, killing more fish than he could have caught in a month of Sundays.

The village church lay next to the Chateau, and was for some time used as a hospital; the most seriously wounded lying on straw. The Padre of the village stuck manfully to his post, and read the burial service over those who were put to rest in the churchyard.

Soupir was frequently shelled owing to the proximity of several of our batteries, and aeroplanes were perpetually

(1) Other ranks:—1 killed, 8 wounded.
(2) Captain M. B. Savage received the D.S.O., and Private Mutlow D.C.M.

Digitized by Google



BRIG.-GENERAL C. S. DAVIDSON, C.B.
Commanded 2nd Battalion from 1914-1916.

PLATE 15.

To face p. 272.

UNIV. OF MICH.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

travelling overhead signalling results with balls of coloured lights.

Very few of the inhabitants remained in the village, and all able-bodied men were viewed with suspicion. It was not long before we discovered the extraordinary efficiency of the German espionage system; they invariably left civilian spies in every village in communication with them by telephone, and we were always coming across wires connected with cellars.

Owing to the slope of the ground, Soupir did not suffer so severely from shell fire as Moussy, and most of the houses remained intact up to the time we left. The few inhabitants who remained behind were very short of food, and were very glad of the bully and biscuits which "Tommy" in his generosity freely offered. It is true that the local baker carried on his trade, but he was unable to satisfy the demands of civil population and troops. The issue of bread was carefully regulated according to the needs of each household.

Actions on the Aisne Heights.

While "A" and "B" Companies had been out fighting at Chavonne the day before, the other two Companies were sent into the trenches North of Soupir to relieve the Irish Guards. At 12 o'clock on this day, "A" and "B" Companies were sent up to take over from "C" and "D." The trenches ran along the edge of the woods North of Soupir, below the crest line of the plateau, and having a field of fire of at most 300 and sometimes as little as 150. The German trenches were behind the crest line to our front, but to the right were in advance of it and could be seen. The advantage by night in the position of our trenches lay in the fact that the enemy would become silhouetted against the sky line in advancing to attack. The ground immediately behind the trenches fell steeply, enabling troops to come right up under cover from view and rifle fire. There were numerous footpaths through the wood and two main tracks from Soupir. It was easy for troops to move up the tracks by day concealed from aeroplanes, but most of the movement and all the issuing of supplies was carried out at night, owing to the fact that the Germans had an unpleasant habit of searching the woods with heavy howitzer fire. As we walked through the woods to the trenches we passed craters of immense size made by the shells, and huge trees torn up in the process. The trees all round the craters were splintered by portions of shell. We noticed that most of the splinter marks were over three feet from the ground, and made a note of the necessity of lying absolutely flat when hearing the approach of a shell. The "Black Marias," fired from a distance, gave us ample warning, and we soon acquired the art of telling by the note of the shell

Digitized by Google

as it sang through the air where it was coming. A shell making the noise of a stopping motor car is dangerous. The trenches were dug into the bank at the edge of the wood, and were provided with loop-holed head cover. They were well constructed and hollowed out underneath in front to form an efficient splinter-proof to crawl into for cover when the shelling commenced. A path through the wood immediately behind the trenches afforded lateral communications. It seemed strange to take up position with so small a field fire, contrary to the teaching of the text books, but we soon found the value of siteing trenches on the reverse slope. With modern artillery fire it was found that any position which allowed of direct observation by hostile batteries soon became untenable, and it was more important to obtain concealment from artillery than field fire.

With the enemy so close at hand, we had bayonets fixed at all times; one man in every eight was on sentry or look-out by day and one in every four by night.

In the evening Captain Savage received an order to send out a patrol to the front, and Lance-Corpl. Watkins took out four men. They proceeded until they could hear the Germans talking, and were discovered and opened fire on by the enemy. Corpl. Watkins came in with his patrol and, finding one man missing, went out again, found him wounded and carried him in. For this plucky act he was mentioned in despatches.

A few Germans were moving on the sky line during the night, and we opened fire occasionally. Otherwise the night was devoid of incident.

TUESDAY, 22nd SEPTEMBER:

Early in the morning 2nd Lieut. A. A. E. Gyde, of "B" Company, was shot by a sniper in the head, and the sniping continued. At about 7 o'clock the North Staffordshire Regiment, who had only just arrived at the front with the 6th Division, came up to relieve us. The advent of the 6th Division made it possible for some of the troops who had had no rest to be taken out of the firing line for a while, and we learnt to our great delight that we were to move back to Bourg to refit.

Billets at Bourg.

Avoiding the dangerous ground between Soupir and Moussy, we went a long way round, crossing the river at Chavonne and marching the other side of it through our old friend Viel d'Arcy, where a hospital had been equipped, and finally arrived at Bourg. There we found "C" and "D" Companies had already settled down into billets, and we hastened to follow their example.

Digitized by Google

Bourg was within range of the big German guns, but up to this time had not been touched, and we were in comparative safety the whole time we were there.

The Officers of "A," with their usual luck, found a splendid billet in a nicely furnished house owned by a buxom widow, who had previously had German Officers billeted upon her. She was an excellent cook and a woman of great strength of character, amusing us very much with tales of how she thwarted the German attempts to loot her house. The men were very comfortable in barns. **In Billets at Bourg.**

WEDNESDAY, 23rd SEPTEMBER:

The day was spent in cleaning up. The men all had baths, and were supplied with new underclothing which had just arrived; and the rifles were thoroughly scoured. Our valises were at hand and we made a comfortable change. At night we slept two in a bed and the four of us in one room. Savage pulled most of the clothes off me and shouted orders most of the night. He kept on telling me my flank was in the air. It was owing to his monopoly of the clothes.

THURSDAY, 24th SEPTEMBER:

The day was spent in rest, eating, washing and letter-writing.

FRIDAY, 25th SEPTEMBER:

At 2 p.m. we received the order to move, and proceeded back to Soupir. We were placed at the disposal of Brigadier-General Doran, the 17th Brigade, the 6th Division, and were sent up into the trenches to thicken the line held by the Rifle Brigade.

The Rifle Brigade trenches were on the immediate right of the old trenches at the edge of the wood which we had held before, and were placed along the front edge of quarries. The line was already so thick that there was no room for our men in the trenches, and we spent most of the evening digging the men into dug-outs at the foot of the quarries. It was possible to walk about along the bottom of the quarries in safety except when there was shelling going on. Most of the German shells went over the quarries, and the rapid fall of the ground behind prevented them doing much harm. **Back at Soupir.**

We stood to arms an hour before dawn.

SATURDAY, 26th SEPTEMBER:

Early in the morning we were heavily shelled and several men were wounded.(1) Poor Ball (Lieut. D. O. W. Ball,

(1) Other ranks :—1 killed, 4 wounded, 3 missing.

Digitized by Google

R.A.M.C.), our Medical Officer, who had all along shown great gallantry in attending to the wounded under fire, was tying up a man who had been hit when he was himself hit by a shell and killed. The Brigade-Major of the Brigade also was shot through the head by a sniper.

At 7 a.m. "A" and "D" Companies were ordered to march back to billet in Soupir, owing to the lack of room in the trenches. We billeted the Company in the old places and went back to our cottage with the coughing woman, who was quite pleased to welcome us; or was it the rum?

SUNDAY, 27th SEPTEMBER:

The Brigadier considered that we were too far away from the trenches in billets at Soupir, and decided to move us to a position of readiness in the woods. At 4 a.m. we set off, led by the Brigade-Major. It was very dark and the men had to go in single file in some places. I found, to my disgust, that the fool of the Company had lost touch, and I was left behind with my platoon and half another, with the choice of several paths, any one of which might lead into the enemy. Fortunately I struck the right one. We took up a position, or rather dug ourselves completely under amongst the trees on the side of a bridle path leading to the trenches. There were about twenty "Black Maria" holes all round us, and some of them were converted into dug-outs and refuse pits. Most of the dug-outs were works of art, and the men facetiously labelled them Ivy Cottage, Rose Villa, etc. The path leading to one was labelled Paradise Walk, admission one woodbine. The artillery fire lately had considerably slackened and no shell came near us all day, which was just as well before we were fully prepared. My dug-out was a large hole, 6ft. by 4ft. and 4ft. deep, covered with logs, earth, and a top layer of turf, lined with leaves and entered by steps, covered at night by a brushwood hurdle. At about 12 o'clock we heard the sound of singing wafted in the breeze. The Germans were holding Church parade behind their lines, and we heard with disgust the tune of "God save the King" set to their national anthem.

On the Aisne Heights.

We slept in our dug-outs with sentries on the paths, and stood to arms as usual one hour before dawn. Brigade and Regimental Headquarters were in dug-outs close at hand.

MONDAY, 28th SEPTEMBER:

A peaceful day in the same dug-outs, which we further improved. The men sat outside and smoked, except when aeroplanes came over. On the sound of the whistle they

Digitized by Google

disappeared into their dug-outs like rabbits into burrows. We knew that had our position been discovered, we should have been shelled out—the number of craters near were sufficient proof of it.

It was possible to bring the cooker up into the wood close to our position, and it arrived at breakfast-time accompanied by the mail. During the whole of the Aisne fight the mail arrived with the greatest regularity, coming up with the supplies every day; letters took five days to come from home in the later stages, though before they took much longer. I received the *Times* every day and read everything, including the advertisements. It was in the middle of this day that Savage made a great discovery in the form of a large cave near our dug-outs and at the back of Regimental Headquarters. From this day onwards the Officers of "A" used to go down into the cave in the evening, light a fire and cook our supper over it. There was scarcely room to stand up, but it was great fun sitting over our fire and bucking for an hour. A fire in the open was, of course, out of the question, and no smoking or lighting matches was allowed after dark.

In the evening, there was heavy firing on the right and left, rockets and fire balls being sent up all along the ridge. Another German attack was meeting with its usual failure.

TUESDAY, 29th SEPTEMBER:

In the morning, I was sent out with Nixon to reconnoitre a road to the trenches held by the Berkshires in the valley, their original position since the first days of the Aisne on the left of the Canal. I had a good opportunity of seeing the excellent work of the R.E. Roads through the wood had been constructed and improved, connecting up all trenches with Headquarters, steps made up the difficult hills and sign posts placed everywhere. One could imagine Cook's tourists being shown all these lovers' walks after the war. **In Bouvelle Wood.**

A washing-place had been constructed by damming a small stream and sawing tubs in half. It was none too safe, as we found later, when a platoon of ours had to seek cover from shrapnel fire. When half-naked they did not take long to dress. Having found our way to the Berkshires, we blazed trees and marked the track and returned.

WEDNESDAY, 30th SEPTEMBER:

Another day in the dug-outs in the wood.

THURSDAY, 1st OCTOBER:

There had been considerable trouble with snipers. Bullets frequently landed in Soupir, and men in the trenches had been hit, apparently from behind, pointing to the conclusion

Digitized by Google

that some snipers had got through our lines and were concealed in the woods. The General decided to organise a drive, and the Company acted as beaters, working through the woods from Soupir up to the guns in the trenches. We drew blank, but the woods were so thick that anyone could have concealed a platoon with perfect safety.

In the evening, we went into the trenches to relieve the Rifle Brigade, and the 60th Rifles took our places in the dug-outs.

FRIDAY, 2nd OCTOBER:

We had a fairly quiet day, but were rather bothered by snipers. They continued firing all day, potting away at the loop-holes and occasionally getting one through. The machine gun Corporal was killed in this way. All our loop-holes were blinded with waterproof sheets, and the look-out men placed themselves between the sheet and the loop-hole.

In the Trenches in Front of Soupir.

There was a particularly good dug-out with a kitchen next door, which we used as an Officers' mess for the Company, and we always congregated there at meal times. At other times Officers were with their platoons.

The routine for the day was as follows:—"Stand to arms one hour before dawn, trenches manned; during day, two men per section on look-out in trenches, remainder in dug-outs resting below; stand to arms one hour before dusk; during night, all men in trenches and one in every four on look-out." To enable the Officers to have some rest, Savage instituted a system of reliefs, each Officer being on duty for the whole Company for two hours at a time. In these trenches, where it was possible to move about, this worked very well.

Our artillery was much more active in these days, and fired with good effect. The fact that they were able from a position down in the valley to lob shells up over our heads into the German trenches 200 yards away speaks well for the accuracy of their fire. We had an Artillery Officer always with us in the trenches in communication by telephone with his battery commanders. Telephones were used with success for all purposes, the woods were a mass of wires connecting Companies with Battalion and Brigade Headquarters. I never saw visual signalling used. All communications were by telephone or orderly. When our guns were going to fire, we were always given the tip to get in and get under, as pieces of shell frequently burst back into the trenches.

During the night the R.E. went out to put up barbed wire entanglements. These were very ingenious, and were mostly constructed under cover and then unrolled and fixed.

Digitized by Google

Our R.E. could frequently hear the Germans doing the same thing quite close to them, and had to work very quietly. It must have been very jumpy work, and there were cases of R.E. men being killed by their own side, in spite of the warning which was always given when they went out to work.

In the evening, we spent our time looking round to find places in which to post snipers to worry the Germans in the way they had been worrying us all day.

The bank behind the quarry made an excellent spot. There was long grass, bushes and trees, giving good cover and a splendid view of the German trenches. From this concealed spot snipers could go on firing all day without danger unless discovered. Having found good places, snipers were told off in pairs and each pair given field glasses and instructions to peg away at the loop-holes all along the enemy lines all day. They were put in position just before daylight.

SATURDAY, 3rd OCTOBER:

The snipers we had taken so much trouble to post had great effect, and the Germans hardly fired a round all day. We were left in peace.

In the German trench on our left we noted a good deal of spade work going on, and a mound of earth gradually increased in size at one point. Thinking perhaps the Germans were sapping, it was decided to send a man out during the night to find out. The moon, however, was so full that it could not be done without too great a risk. During the night there was a heavy attack along the Beaulne Spur on the right, illuminated by fire rockets. **Sniping the Germans.**

SUNDAY, 4th OCTOBER:

In the early morning the Sappers profited by an early mist to carry out the work of entanglement which the moon during the night had prevented. It was risky work, owing to the shifting of the mist, and in the end the mist suddenly lifted, leaving them high and dry and under the necessity of making a bolt for it.

In the afternoon we heard the old German band going on again. In the evening we were relieved by the 60th Rifles, and moved back to our old friends the dug-outs in the woods.

MONDAY, 5th OCTOBER:

I have not mentioned the shell fire lately, but it must not be imagined that it had ceased. During the whole of the Aisne battle we were never without it; if shells were not actually travelling overhead or bursting near, the noise of them at some other portion of the line was always with us,

Digitized by Google

except at night time. Every night there was heavy rifle fire at some portion of the line and bursts from the machine guns. Very often these were false alarms, but at other times either the Germans or ourselves were making tentative attacks. Night attacks and alarms were always accompanied by the firing of rockets by both sides to illuminate the enemy, and in consequence from our position in the trenches we could always locate the position of the firing.

While we were in dug-outs in the woods we had nothing more to contend with than spent bullets. One man was hit in the chest, and the bullet stopped half-way in and was pulled out by hand.

In the evening we went again to the old cave and ate our supper. Georges had procured a turkey for us from the village. I call it a turkey, but it was no bigger than a large fowl.

TUESDAY, 8th OCTOBER:

In the Trenches, Beaulne Spur.

The greater part of the day was spent in the same place in the woods. In the evening the Battalion was withdrawn and marched *via* Soupir and Chavonne to Moussy. There we found two Companies of the King's, the remainder being in the trenches on the Beaulne Spur. The King's were to be given a rest in Bourg, and we were to take over from them. "B" and "C" Companies were left in billets in the village, which had suffered a great deal since we last saw it, and "A" and "D" proceeded out to take over the trenches, "D" taking the left by the Canal and "A" the right in the woods on the side of the Beaulne Spur. The Queen's, of the 5th Brigade, were on our right. We learnt from the King's that we were taking over a hot corner and that it was impossible to move without drawing machine gun fire. Fortunately, it was not as bad as painted, but it was bad enough.

We took over the trenches as quietly as possible in the dark, no easy matter as the line was by no means uniform and the pits were not connected up. The first thing we noticed was the horrible smell. Sanitation had been badly attended to, owing to the fire of the enemy, and it had been impossible to bury the dead, many of whom had been lying out for three weeks or more. The stench was overpowering at night when the air was still, and everyone tied mufflers round their mouths and noses. There was very little field of fire from the trenches, owing to the thickness of the wood, and the barbed wire in front was in consequence placed as close as possible.

End of Brev.-Major J. L. Dent's Diary.

Digitized by Google

The 2nd Battalion remained on duty in the trenches at Beaulne Spur from the 7th October until 15th October. A number of British dead, as well as German dead, could be seen in front of the Staffords' trenches; but any attempt to go out and bury our own dead was frustrated by the enemy, who opened a very heavy fire on the slightest movement of our men. But "during the night of the 7th, L/Corpl. Turner and a party of our men buried 17 of our own dead near the trenches (men of the Worcestershire Regiment), and their identity discs were sent to Battalion Headquarters."(1)

Next day, 8th October, Captain Savage " received orders to send out an Officers' patrol and endeavour to find out if the German Infantry in front had been replaced by Cavalry, and if not, the No. of the Regiment in front of us."(2)

Lieut. J. L. Dent, with two sections of "A" Company, were sent out before dawn. After they had been out for some time, a shot and screams were heard, "and about ten minutes afterwards two of the patrol came in and reported that they had attacked the Germans, who had retired." Lieut. Dent and Pte. Simmonds had crept up close to a German sentry, and the sentry observing them was about to give the alarm, when he was shot by Pte. Simmonds. The patrol then charged the Germans with the bayonet, who retired. The patrol then returned to our trenches, bringing the helmet from the German sentry who had been shot. He belonged to the 13th German Reserve Regiment. The helmet was sent to Brigade Headquarters. This smart piece of patrol work was carried out without the loss of a man.

For this raid Lieut. J. L. Dent received the immediate award of the D.S.O., and Pte. Simmonds received the D.C.M.

On the 15th, the Battalion was relieved by the 267th French Regiment, who took over these trenches. On October 11th, the 2nd Division had received orders to be ready to move at short notice.

The Race to the Sea.

Owing to a fresh German advance down the coast from Ostend, designed to capture the Channel ports, the British line had extended more and more towards the sea beyond Ypres: it was a race as to who should get there first; but the exhausted Belgians, retiring behind the Yser, held the line from the coast to Dixmude, supported by French Territorials on their right, until these joined up with the British forces North of Ypres. The 7th Division was holding the position to the East of Ypres; their line ran from Zandvoorde through Gheluvelt to Zonnebeke; South and West of Ypres were the

(1) Captain M. B. Savage's Diary.
(2) *Ibid.*

Digitized by Google

British Cavalry Brigades, and the 2nd British Army Corps operating against Lille and La Bassée.

The crisis of the great struggle for Ypres and the open road to the Channel Ports was near. If the Germans had succeeded in cutting a way through between the British and French, it would have meant probably the end of the war. Therefore, on October 17th, the 1st British Army Corps was rushed up from Moussy on the Aisne to the new point of danger. The French having taken over the line from below Arras to Rheims, the British were able to go to the assistance of their hard-pressed comrades in the North. The heavy Artillery of the Division had been sent on in advance, and the 2nd Battalion entrained at Fismes in the evening of the 16th October. The race to the sea had begun. Passing through Boulogne and Calais, they arrived at Hazebrouck at midnight on the 17th. They were taken on by train to Strazelle (five miles), where they detrained and marched back to Hazebrouck, arriving about 4 am. on the 18th, the men going into billets in a school, while the Officers were billeted in a house near. They remained in this district until the 20th, when they marched into Ypres, and, by a curious coincidence, occupied the same billets the 1st Battalion had held three days previously—who were in the front line about two miles from the 2nd Battalion.

Next day, on their way up to Wieltje, while halted on the road outside Ypres, the 80th French Regiment passed them, and were keenly interested on learning that the 2nd Battalion were the 80th Regiment also.

The Battalion was in reserve at Potijze for the 21st and 22nd October, but on the 23rd, at 1.30 a.m., they moved further North to Pilkem to reinforce the 1st Brigade entrenched there. On arrival, as soon as it was light, the Battalion moved out in the direction of Bixschoote, heavy firing going on all round.

The 1st Queen's.

On arrival at Pilkem, a counter-attack was made against the Germans, who had forced the 1st Queen's back from the line they were holding. In this attack, "A" and "D" Companies of the South Staffords were sent into the firing line with the 1st Queen's, the rest of the Battalion being in reserve.

"We remained in the road in support for some time. The Loyal North Lancashires, who were in the front line, moved out to attack the German trenches, which lay more or less parallel to the Bixschoote—Langemarck road, a mile to the North of Pilkem; and the Battalion went forward in support, 'A' Company on the right and 'D' Company on the left.

Digitized by Google

"We advanced under a heavy rifle fire, but there were several large farms which assisted us very much in our advance, screening us from view and rifle fire. Eventually we located the German trenches, and by cutting holes through hedges we were able to get up to within about 200 yards of the enemy's trenches. Lieut. J. L. Dent brought up his Platoon to my support, although badly wounded in knee, but he could go no further. Heard later that 2nd Lieut. F. L. Hazlewood had been shot through the chest, and Lieut. B. J. H. Scott killed. He had been sent with the C.O. of the Loyal North Lancashires to bring us word regarding the place we were to reinforce them. Battle of Langemarck.

"A Platoon from another Company tried to come up to my support on the left, a machine gun got on to them and I saw a number of men bowled over, only one Officer and one man reaching the cover of the hedge. Sent a Platoon under Captain Wilson (of the 3rd Battalion South Staffs. Regiment) to hold a farm near."(1)

The work of the 2nd South Staffords helped the 1st Queen's Regiment to regain the advanced trenches from which they had retired the previous evening. In this sector these two Companies had a rather heavy casualty list, for 2nd Lieut. B. J. H. Scott was killed, Captain M. B. Savage, Lieuts. J. L. Dent and Hazelgrove were wounded, with 45 other ranks killed and wounded. At 4 p.m. these two Companies were withdrawn, and the whole Battalion remained in reserve just North of Pilkem.

For this good work the 2nd Battalion received the following message from the G.O.C. 6th Infantry Brigade:—"General Munro desires that the following extract from a letter he has received from the G.O.C. 1st Division be communicated to the 2nd Battalion South Staffordshire Regiment."

> "I should like to congratulate the South Staffords on their prompt and rapid night march and their gallant action in the attack, which resulted in the original line being occupied by the 1st Division.
>
> "(Signed) S. H. Lomax, M.G.,
> "Commanding 1st Division."

Next day, the 2nd Battalion rejoined its own Brigade (6th Infantry Brigade) at Frezenberg, and occupied a farm in the wood about three kilometres North of Moldhoek, where they passed the 1st Battalion South Staffords, who were in front of Zonnebeke. Here they remained until the 27th October, supporting the 1st King's Liverpool Regiment on

(1) Diary, Captain M. B. Savage.

Digitized by Google

their right. On the morning of the 26th, the 6th Brigade made a still further advance, and the 2nd Battalion advanced and took over the line which had been held for the last two days by the Royal Berkshire Regiment, and later taking up a line fifty yards in advance of the main road, Becelaere—Moorslede road, which was the point of the salient in front of Ypres.

Under a heavy shell fire, which extended all along the ridge and line of the Becelaere road, the 2nd South Staffords, at 11.30 a.m., moved forward through the lines of the Berkshire Regiment, who were withdrawn into reserve. The Battalion made steady progress, although casualties were severe, and by 4.30 p.m. had reached the edge of the wood just East of the fifth kilometre stone. Here, in the woods, the Battalion came on to a wide ridge, at the farther end of which were some 200 to 300 German infantry. These pretended to surrender by waving white flags, but when a party of the South Staffords went forward to take them, they threw down their flags and opened fire with rifles and machine guns. The Staffords quickly retaliated, and then proceeded to dig themselves in on the ground won.

First Battle of Ypres, 1914.

The position on the morning of October 27th was as follows:—The 2nd Division held the line Zonnebeke—Becelaere on their right, the 1st Division held the line from Reytel to the Gheluvelt cross-roads; next on the right, the line was prolonged by the 7th Division, from Gheluvelt to Zandvoorde. Both the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the Regiment being engaged.

From their position on the main road facing the Passchendaele Ridge, the 2nd Battalion advanced to the road running East and West on the East of Passchendaele Wood, which was on their immediate front the previous day; they met with strong opposition from the Germans, who were in great strength, but they succeeded in driving back the enemy with heavy loss, although they themselves suffered severely.(1)

The attack of the 6th Brigade made good progress, and at 7.15 a.m. the South Staffords, pressing on with the King's Royal Rifles on their left, occupied without opposition the German trenches from which the white flag had been treacherously shown on the previous day. Following up their advantage, by 12.45 the South Staffords had reached the eastern edge of the wood and reported that the high ground about Keiberg was strongly held and entrenched, and they could get no further.

---

(1) Casualties:—Lieuts. F. E. Robinson and D. T. F. Kirkpatrick killed; 3 officers wounded; 115 other ranks killed, wounded and missing.

Digitized by Google

For the next two days there was a dangerous lull in the fighting, the enemy was gathering his forces for a cumulative attack upon the whole British line. Very early on the morning of Thursday, 29th October, the German host was flung against the British 1st Division, who were driven from their trenches, all the morning the battle swayed backwards and forwards, but by noon the Germans began to give way, and by night, the position had been recaptured. The artillery fire was terrific, and casualties were high, but from October 28th until November 15th, the old 80th hung on to their lines in spite of the heavy artillery fire they had to endure. On October 30th the Germans opened a heavy bombardment on the Battalion's trenches, following it up by a big Infantry attack. There was some hard and fierce fighting, but the attack was repulsed. The Germans hurled themselves on the Staffords' trenches in a last desperate effort to break through, stimulated by the presence of the German Emperor who watched the attack. Mass after mass of fresh German troops, including the picked Regiments of their Army, broke and reeled in the face of the determined opposition of the British soldier. How these men endured the physical strain for so many days is incredible, it showed, to quote Napier, "With what a strength and majesty the British soldier fights."

Battle of Gheluvelt.

About 6 a.m. on October 30th the Germans opened a violent artillery and rifle fire on the trenches of the 6th Brigade, following it up half an hour later by a strong attack on the line held by the 2nd South Staffords and King's Royal Rifles. "On the right of the 2nd South Staffords the enemy advanced right up to the barbed wire, a German Officer being killed whilst actually engaged in cutting the wire." This attack was beaten off as was another attack made at 11.30 a.m.

On the 1st November an attack was to be made on Becelaere by the 5th and 6th Infantry Brigades, and French troops under General Bernard. At 6.30 a.m., the leading French troops passed through the lines of the 5th and 6th Brigades, and got into the front trenches.

A thick mist covered everything, so that artillery assistance could not be given. The situation was difficult, and Divisions were split up, Brigades were seldom complete, having lent Battalions to strengthen various parts of the line. Some Battalions of the 2nd Division were lent to the 1st and 7th Divisions. As the mist cleared, the French advanced to the attack, but were brought to a standstill by intense German artillery fire.

At 4.20 p.m. a German Infantry attack was launched on the line of trenches held by the 2nd South Staffords and the Connaught Rangers, but it was repulsed with heavy loss to the

Digitized by Google

enemy. The South Staffords' left joined up with the 18th (French) Division, while on their right were the Connaught Rangers and Highland Light Infantry, in the wooded country in front of Molenhoek, the line being continued by the 3rd and 2nd Coldstream Guards and King's Liverpool Regiment until it linked up with the 7th Division, who were between Gheluvelt and Hollebeke, in front of Zandvoorde.

On the 2nd November, at 12.45 a.m., the 2nd South Staffords reported that the French on their left were being driven back, exposing the Battalion's left flank. Captain A. F. G. Kilby twice advanced his Company, and after some stiff fighting eventually drove the Germans out of the wood, and the left flank of the Battalion was later restored by French reinforcements. These three Companies of the South Staffords held on to their position in the front line in the wood until the 9th November. On the night of November 4th the weather changed, and pouring rain added to the discomfort of the troops. It was difficult to evacuate the wounded, and equally difficult to bring up supplies to the troops in the trenches, for the German artillery had got the range of the area across which reliefs had to pass, and shelled them continuously. The 5th November saw two attacks on the front line held by a mixed contingent of the Royal Berkshires, the Highland Light Infantry and the 2nd South Staffords. Both attacks were repulsed, but the second attack was more serious, and reinforcements of cooks, police, servants and whoever could be collected, were hurried up to the threatened point, and although the Germans succeeded in establishing themselves within ten yards of the Connaught's lines, the line was never broken.

The Salient at Ypres.

During this period from 1st to 9th November, the 2nd South Staffords were holding the most advanced line of the whole British Army, and were constantly being heavily shelled, but owing to the excellent trenches they had constructed their casualty list was low compared to the other Regiments, although the German trenches only varied from forty-five to one hundred yards from them.

November 8th was a critical day for the Battalion, for the Germans attacked the French on the South Staffords' left, and broke through them in some force. Sections were held by desperate men, who had received orders to hold on, and in spite of continuous enemy attacks on the left of the Battalion, the 2nd South Staffords held their own. They were hard pressed, and a section of the Battalion who were holding an island redoubt in a spinney three hundred yards west of the Zonnebeke-Beceleare Road was practically wiped out.

Digitized by Google

Sergeant King was wounded and captured by the enemy, and Private Weaver escaped—all the rest were killed. Their heroic stand is fittingly commemorated in the following poem:—

"HOW THE SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRES HELD THE TRENCH.

"Nineteen men and a Sergeant stood
Grimly to arms as the word was passed:
'We can spare no more: you must hold this trench;
Stick to it, cling to it right to the last.'

"Nineteen men and a Sergeant watched
With smothered jest as the dawn drew nigh
Cruel and cold, like a patient ghoul,
Till a man could see to struggle and die.

"Out of the silence, out of the gloom,
Came with a scream the ranging shell,
First of the furies, till with the day
The twenty were crouched in a battered Hell.

"Cavernous, pitted, the Belgian fields
Stretched in their ruin before the light;
And the tumult sank, with a remnant left
Ripe for the thrust of the foeman's might.

"On and on in their hosts they came
As the sun strode over the surging field,
Withered and broke and rallied and came
At the handful ignorant how to yield.

"And the dusk stole down and the hosts drew back
Baffled and bitter and reeling and thin,
Sank to the arms of the pitiful night—
And the dead were too many to gather in.

" 'Not a word from that trench the whole day long
'And still at night not a word to me!
'Go, bring me the truth!' the Colonel said;
And they crept through the ruins of earth to see

"Silence! nought else through the field, in the trench,
And never the murmuring more in jest:
Crushed but unbroken, dead, unsubdued,
Nineteen men lay bosomed in rest.

"They came to the last—till his watch was done
His shattered body had death defied;
And, roused by the voice of an English friend,
'We have held it as ordered,' he said—and died."(1)

---

(1) "Days of Destiny." Gorell Barnes, Rifle Brigade. (Longmans, Green & Co.) By permission of Lord Gorell.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

covered their Regiments and the Army to which they belonged with honour and glory.

The price paid was heavy, but they exacted a far heavier toll from the enemy. The victory was decisive, for it compelled the enemy to conform to the battle line the Allies had set, and took from him his short-lived initiative.

The Allied line now was intact from the Switzerland border to the shores of the North Sea, and both sides settled down to the dreary and harassing life of trench warfare.

On the 16th November, the Battalion in Brigade marched into Ypres, and billeted there, leaving on the 18th for Caestre, where they remained resting and refitting until 21st December. While in rest billets at Caestre, on December 3rd, the 6th Infantry Brigade was visited by H.M. the King, who was accompanied by H.R.H. the Prince of Wales.

Refitting at Caestre.

On the battle front from the conclusion of the Battle of Ypres, there were only minor operations, such as small organised attacks by the British on selected points of the German front line trenches; attacks, and counter-attacks, with the guns scarcely ever silent, until about the middle of December. The Indian Corps, under Sir James Willcocks, was holding the line near La Bassée; from Cuinchy, through Givenchy and Festubert, continuing North to the West of Neuve Chapelle, where the French took over the line. The Indian Corps attacked the German advanced trenches early on the morning of the 19th December, and captured two lines of German trenches; but when morning broke it was found the position was untenable, owing to both flanks being in the air.

Next day, the 20th, the Germans attacked along the whole Indian front with artillery and trench mortars, following it up by a strong infantry attack, which forced the Sirhind Brigade to fall back; the Germans capturing a large part of Givenchy. Reinforcements were hurried up, both British and French, and on the 22nd December the 2nd South Staffords left Caestre in motor 'buses of the London General Omnibus Company and drove to Bethune; from thence marching to Beuvry, where, after a halt of about two hours, they marched out to take over the trenches held by the 57th Wilde's Rifles (Indian Corps) and a Company of French Infantry. The line they took over extended from the North bank of the La Bassée Canal to Gorre, just East of Givenchy village, a frontage of 1,000 yards. "A," "B," and "C" Companies were in the trenches, with "D" Company in support. Here they joined up with the Royal Berks. While in these trenches, which varied in distance 150 yards to 600

Digitized by Google

yards from the Germans, they were subjected to continual sniping both day and night, but were not worried much by shell fire.

Trench warfare in these early days was bad enough, when they were cooped up with their dead for a fortnight under constant fire in shallow mud-holes; but when the wet winter started, the trenches in Flanders became indescribable: all around Ypres the trenches were liable to constant flooding, and the approaches to them became seas of mud. "But far worse than any risk to life was the misery of standing for hours up to the waist in icy water, of having every pore of the skin impregnated with mud, of finding the walls of a trench dissolving in slimy torrents, while rifles jammed, clothes rotted, and feet were frostbitten: it was a lesson in the extremes to which human nature can go."(1)

Trench Warfare.

But in spite of this awful discomfort, the health of the men was marvellously maintained; so efficient was the British Commissariat work, and so ample the provision of comforts and warm clothes. Further, with the beginning of 1915, a new system of reliefs was introduced, giving the men a shorter period in the trenches. This, with better billets, and a fuller provision of baths in the billeting area, did much to ease the weariness and discomfort they had to endure.

They held this position until the 26th December, passing Christmas Day in the trenches; for they were not so fortunate as their comrades of the 1st Battalion, who spent their Christmas Day in billets. On the 26th, the 2nd Battalion were relieved in the trenches by the 2nd Royal Sussex Regiment, and the Battalion went into temporary billets at Essars, moving on the 29th to billets South of Locon, near Bethune, where they remained until 2nd January, 1915.

(1) Buchan, History of the Great War.

Digitized by Google

RECORD OF THE 2ND BATTALION, 1915.

Trench Warfare—At Givenchy—Raid on German Trench—Battle of Neuve Chapelle—Holding Attack on Givenchy—Trench Warfare—Battle of Aubers Ridge—Richbourg l'Avoue—Battle of Festubert—Trench Warfare—Battle of Loos—Captain A. F. G. Kilby wins Victoria Cross—Trench Warfare—Inspection by H.M. King George V.—In Front of Cambrin—Gibson's Crater—Christmas in Billets.

FOR the whole of the year 1915 the 2nd Battalion were operating in the La Bassée sector. The British Forces had been reorganised at the end of December, 1914, and on the 1st January, 1915, Major-General H. S. Horne took over the command of the 2nd Division, *vice* General C. C. Munro, who was appointed to the command of the First Corps.

The weather conditions were very bad, the snow and floods preventing any active operations, and with the exception of the usual shelling and sniping, no infantry attacks were made on the 2nd Division during the month of January.

The 2nd Battalion moved into the line at Le Touret on January 2nd, taking over from the 2nd Grenadier Guards. The trenches were indescribable, almost waist deep in water in many places. Under these conditions daily relief was a necessity, and the Companies interchanged daily. Two days in trenches and two days in billets was the order. During the month of January, sickness in the Battalion was rather heavy, 2 Officers and 96 men going sick, nearly all suffering from severe cold, rheumatism and swollen feet. The marvel is that the list was not greater owing to the privations endured. The filth and dirt of the trenches transformed the usually smart men into dirty scarecrows, but it was difficult for men burrowing in the ground to preserve anything like an aspect of cleanliness. Fortunately, baths and washhouses had been installed in the rest area, and the men were able to wash themselves, shave, and get their hair cut. There was a recurrence of heavy fighting on the 25th and 26th of January to mark the celebration of the German Emperor's birthday, and an attack was made on the 1st Division, who were holding the salient in front of what was known as the "Railway Triangle" in front of La Bassée; all this ground was a brick-field, with old kilns and smoke stacks, and in the second line, which had been prepared a few hundred yards behind, a "keep" had been constructed about the centre. A place of

Trench Warfare.

Digitized by Google

terrible renown in the later stages of the war. On the left of the position was the La Bassée Canal, and the Germans concentrated much shell fire on the lock near to Cuinchy—with the intention of smashing it and flooding the British trenches. About 6 a.m. on the morning of 25th January a German deserter came in, and warned our men that there would be an attack in half an hour. Punctually to the moment came the attack—the trenches in the salient were blown in at once, and the line was broken. The 2nd Division was ordered to concentrate on the main road through Mesplaux and await orders, they were not called upon until the 28th, as a counter-attack had driven the Germans far enough back to restore the somewhat broken line, and strengthen it. The 2nd South Staffords taking over from the 1st King's Royal Rifles in the trenches in Rue de Bois. "A" and "B" Companies in the line, with "C" and "D" in reserve billets.

On the last day of January Lt.-Col. C. S. Davidson, C.B., was admitted to hospital, and subsequently returned to England, the command of the 2nd Battalion was taken over by Brev. Lieut.-Colonel P. C. L. Routledge, and on February 3rd the 2nd South Staffords went to Givenchy to relieve the Munster Fusiliers and half the Gloucester Regiment.

Trench Warfare.

The Germans were continually attacking, but made little headway, being driven out of positions they had captured by our repeated counter-attacks. The system of holding the line was now altered, two Battalions being placed in the line in each section, each finding their own supports, the usual method being to put two Companies in the front line, and two in reserve—Companies relieving each other alternately, every forty-eight hours.

On February 7th the 2nd South Staffords received two Companies of Glasgow Highlanders, and next day the front line was divided into three sections, two sections held by "A" and "B" Companies South Staffords, one by "D" Company Glasgow Highlanders, with the other Companies in reserve along the La Bassée Canal.

In front of the left section of the line held by the 2nd South Staffords, occupied by "A" Company, on February 20th, it was proposed to take a German trench opposite the "Duck's Bill" (Givenchy section), with the object of finding out if the enemy was mining up to our front, and if so to destroy it.

Volunteers from "A" and "C" Companies, 2nd South Staffords, of 20 men each, under 2nd Lieut. L. T. Despicht and 2nd Lieut. J. St. C. G. Harris, with other parties of the 1st Royal Berks and 9th Highland Light Infantry (Glasgow Highlanders) formed the storming and demolition parties, the

Digitized by Google

South Staffords forming the right column, while the Royal Berks formed the left column of assault.

At 5 p.m. the artillery bombardment of the German trench began, breaching the wire and smashing up portions of the enemy trench, while covering fire by the troops on both flanks was opened, thus preventing the enemy from firing on the attacking parties.

At 5.30 p.m. the storming parties left their trenches. The South Staffords led by 2nd Lieut. L. T. Despicht, had no sooner started than they were partially buried by the explosion of a large shell, and nearly the whole of the storming party was knocked down and injured. 2nd Lieut. J. St. C. G. Harris, seeing the confusion, led his supports forward and was seriously wounded at the enemy's trench. 2nd Lieut. Despicht, although wounded, behaved extraordinarily well, crawling up to the German parapet and cheering on the men. About five or six Germans were seen who retired before the South Staffords attack. No trace of mining was discovered by the R.E. parties, and the whole party retired. Unfortunately 2nd Lieut. J. St. C. G. Harris, who was wounded near the German trench, fell into it, and was never recovered.

Raid opposite "Duck's Bill," Givenchy.

The left column, led by Lieut. Burney, and 20 men of the 1st Royal Berks, were equally successful in getting into the German trenches, and retired unmolested.

The South Staffords casualty list for this raid was 2nd Lieut. J. St. C. G. Harris and one other rank killed, 2nd Lieut. Despicht and four other ranks wounded. The operation was quite satisfactory and was over by 5.50 p.m.

The 2nd Battalion remained in the Givenchy section until the eve of the battle of Neuve Chapelle, which began on March 10th, 1915, and during this period the 5th King's (Liverpool) Regiment joined the 2nd Division, and was posted to the 6th Infantry Brigade, which was now composed of five Battalions:—1st King's (Liverpool) Regiment, 1st K.R.R., 1st Royal Berks, 2nd South Staffords, and 5th King's (Liverpool) Regiment.

The British Force had now been organised into two Armies, under Sir John French, Commander-in-Chief. The 1st Army, commanded by Sir Douglas Haig, comprised the 1st, 4th and Indian Corps, and held the line from La Bassée to Estaires, north of Neuve Chapelle; while the 2nd Army, commanded by Sir H. Smith-Dorrien, continued the front to the Ypres salient, where it joined up with the French and Belgians extending the line to the Coast.

Digitized by Google

It had been decided by Sir John French that the British should make an offensive attack along their front, for reasons which he sets out at some length in his Dispatch, and the section chosen for the attack was the village of Neuve Chapelle. We had captured this village on October 16th, 1914, but a heavy German counter-attack later had recaptured it from us. The assault of Neuve Chapelle was to be undertaken by the 1st Army, the 4th Corps operating on the north, and the Indian Corps on the south, while, in order to keep the Germans occupied and prevent them from sending reinforcements, two supplementary attacks were to be made on the flanks of the main movement. One, a holding attack at Givenchy by the 1st Corps, and the other, by the 3rd Corps of the 2nd Army, just south of Armentieres.

From ten o'clock on the evening of March 9th the infantry assembled, trench and ditch was full of them, all eager and waiting for the long delayed advance.

The morning of March 10th was grey and sullen, clouds hung low in the sky, and there was mist in the distance, but although the Germans sensed that something was astir in the British trenches they made no attempt to find out what was afoot.

Battle of Neuve Chapelle.

At 7.30 a.m. a terrific bombardment began on the German trenches—the air was split by a pandemonium of sound—four shells to the yard was our fire, and at the end of this thirty-five minutes' preparation there were no German trenches, simply a crumbled mass of debris and mangled bodies. Our gunners then lengthened their range, and the houses in the village in rear of the first German line crumpled up like paper.

The 6th Infantry Brigade advanced immediately the barrage lifted, attacking the German position north-east of Givenchy. They advanced in three columns:—

Right Column—3 Companies 2nd South Staffords Regt., under Brev. Lieut.-Colonel P. C. L. Routledge.

Centre Column—3 Companies 1st King's Liverpool Regt.

Left Column—3 Companies 1st King's Royal Rifles.

The right column was constituted as follows:—"B" Company under Lieut. J. S. Townsend, to lead the assault, supported by "C" Company under Captain H. S. Blockey, and "A" Company under Captain H. H. Sabben.

At 8.10 a.m. "B" Company advanced against the enemy's trenches in front of "Duck's Bill," just east of Givenchy village. The advance commenced from three previously prepared points in the Battalion front line, where traverses

Digitized by Google

had been built by the East Anglian Field Company R.E. (Territorials), and a portion of the parapet knocked down to enable the men to leave the trench. In addition a certain amount of wire, which consisted of "knife rest frames" just in front of the parapet, had been removed during the previous night to allow the men to pass through it.

No sooner were the men out over the parapet when they came under a very severe cross fire from two machine guns in the German trench, which at this point was only 80 yards distant from the South Staffords. A certain number of them managed to gain the German trench, but were unable to remain there. 2nd Lieut. G. M. F. Hewart (unattached list Indian Army, attached 2nd South Staffs. Regt.), and fifteen men attacked with the object of capturing a machine gun which was doing great execution, but none of them returned.

2nd Lieut. W. D. Wood, with about twelve men, got into the German trench on the right, but they were bombed out by the enemy. 2nd Lieut. W. D. Wood then headed another party, and a platoon of "C" Company under 2nd Lieut. R. J. Richardson, was also sent forward, but no permanent lodgement could be made in the enemy trenches. Eventually the attack ceased, and the right column was ordered to reform.

Battle of Neuve Chapelle.

"C" Company remained in occupation of the Battalion front line, "A" Company having withdrawn to Marie Redoubt, and a communication trench leading to the front line of trenches. Here they waited while preparations were being made for a fresh artillery bombardment on the uncut German wire, which had held up the first attempt.

The men only had what food they had been able to carry with them, and owing to the German machine gun fire, it was almost impossible to get further rations up to them.

About 1 p.m. orders were received from the 6th Infantry Brigade Headquarters that a fresh bombardment would take place at 2.15 p.m., followed by a fresh assault at 2.45 p.m., in which the right column was to have one Company of the 1st Royal Berkshire Regiment in support. Another Company of the Berkshires was to deliver an assault between the right column and the centre column if the German wire was cut by our artillery.

"C" Company, South Staffords, was told off to lead the attack, supported by "A" Company. "B" Company, which had suffered very heavily in the morning, owing to the uncut German wire, being withdrawn.

Captain H. S. Blockey, "C" Company, conferred with Lieut. J. S. Townsend of "B" Company, on the position, and

Digitized by Google

made arrangements for the fresh assault, and as the Germans now had trained their machine guns on the positions in our line from which the previous attacking parties had left the trenches, it was decided that the men should get over the parapet by means of sandbag steps erected in other parts of the line.

It was arranged that the attack was to be made by two platoons of "C" Company in the front line, supported immediately by the other two platoons.

"A" Company was to follow in the same order, but owing to the fact that sufficient of our wire had not been removed, each platoon could only start on a frontage of one section.

Battle of Neuve Chapelle.

The bombardment began at 2.15 p.m. and at 2.45 p.m. the leading sections advanced, only to be mown down by machine gun fire as soon as they had surmounted the parapet. Meanwhile a portion of the Berkshire Regiment, which was to have made an assault to the left of the Staffords, rushed into the communication trench by which the support was to come up, and blocked "A" Company, who were thus unable to support "C" Company closely. It was found that the second bombardment had not cut the German wire, and apparently done little damage to their trenches, so after consultation between the Officer Commanding right column and the Officer Commanding Royal Berkshire Regiment, who was directing the movements of his intermediate column, it was decided not to press the assault further.

A report was sent to 6th Brigade Headquarters, and about 3.45 p.m. orders were received to reform the garrison. This was done, and the column formed up in the following order:— "A" Company leading, "C" Company, "B" Company.

About 4 p.m. orders were received to repair the trenches with the assistance of the Royal Engineers, and to collect the wounded and their equipment.

This work was continued till a late hour, the stretcher bearers working very hard to remove all casualties.(1)

At about midnight 10/11th March, the 2nd South Staffords' left trench was relieved by the 1st Irish Guards, and "A," "B," and "C" Companies, with one platoon of "D" Com-

(1) In this action the 2nd Battalion suffered the following losses:—
KILLED.—Lieut. G. E. A. Parker, Lieut. L. F. Yeo (died of wounds), 2nd Lieut. H. C. Stonor, 2nd Lieut. A. D. Sprunt (died of wounds), and 24 other ranks.
WOUNDED.—Lieut. J. S. Townsend, 2nd Lieut. R. J. R. Richardson, and 74 other ranks.
MISSING.—2nd Lieut. G. M. F. Hewart and 33 other ranks.

Digitized by Google

pany, returned to billets at Pont Fixe, the remainder of the line being held by "D" Company and the 5th King's Liverpool Regiment. About 6 a.m. on the 11th March the 6th Infantry Brigade received orders that the offensive would be resumed, and that the 1st Royal Berkshire Regiment was to be ready to move at 7.30 a.m. after a preliminary bombardment. "A" Company, 2nd South Staffords, was also ordered to be in readiness to support the Berkshires in the attack. The attack, however, was not made, and the remainder of the line held by the Battalion was taken over by the 3rd Coldstream Guards. The Battalion then marched to billets in Bethune.

The capture of Neuve Chapelle was a substantial gain, for the British had advanced more than a mile on a three mile front, and the 2nd South Staffords had materially helped by the containing attack which held up the Germans at Givenchy and prevented them from sending their Forces to Neuve Chapelle. The 2nd Battalion was complimented on its bearing throughout these operations by both the Divisional and Corps Commanders, and by Brig.-General Fanshawe, commanding 6th Infantry Brigade, who expressed themselves highly pleased with the work of all ranks. The 2nd South Staffords now enjoyed a well earned rest for twelve days, training and refitting, and during this period they were reinforced by 15 Officers and 226 other ranks, making the total strength 29 Officers and 1,037 other ranks. During this period too, the 7th King's Liverpool Regiment (T.F.) joined the 2nd Division, and was posted to the 6th Infantry Brigade, which now comprised six Battalions.

Resting and Refitting.

On March 25th, the 2nd South Staffords, now refitted and up to full strength again, marched out of Bethune, and relieved the 1st King's Royal Rifles in the trenches at Cuinchy, just south of Givenchy. From this date until the battle of Festubert on May 15th, the 2nd Battalion were either on duty in the trenches at Cuinchy, or training in billets on the Bethune—La Bassée road. Trench warfare was in full swing, and new methods of attack were introduced, bombs were provided, and the First Corps received their first instruction in "bomb-throwing" as part of their training while in rest billets. Trench mortars, a new engine of warfare, first introduced by the Germans, who called them "minenwerfer," now formed part of the British equipment, and these, with the greatly improved form of our snipers, were repeatedly successful in silencing the Germans. "Whizz-bangs" now made their appearance, but the troops soon became accustomed to them. Mining and counter-mining was carried on by both British and Germans, a mine being exploded on our side was immediately followed by a burst of fire from the German trenches, while in addition, the positions held by the Battalion were heavily shelled, fortunately with few casualties. During

Digitized by Google

one tour of duty in the line early in April, 2nd Lieut. H. R. C. Martin was wounded by a trench mortar, and a few days later 2nd Lieut. B. F. S. Douglas was killed by a sniper while observing from a "brick-stack" in the lines. The last week in April the Germans bombarded the front line trenches with 5.9 howitzers and minenwerfers, breaching the parapet in several places. On April 22nd the front line trenches held by "D" Company had a heavy gruelling, twelve large shells were fired, most of which fell on the 2nd South Staffords' trenches, 2nd Lieuts. S. W. H. S. Douglas-Willan and H. C. Christopherson and seven men being wounded. Lieut.-Colonel C. S. Davidson, C.B., returned from sick leave and resumed command again on April 24th. Throughout the month of April training in attack by all Companies was carried out while in the rest billets, and preparations were made for a further advance, all spare stores were got rid of, and the load to be carried by the men lightened as much as possible. The strength of the 2nd Battalion at the end of April was 27 Officers and 1,186 other ranks, many of whom had seen previous service during the war. During the period described the Germans had made their second attack on Ypres, and were containing the British on the Givenchy front to prevent reinforcements being sent north to Ypres. The Germans finding the Forces opposed to them composed of a finer material than their own, descended to the damnable tactics of using poison gas to try and secure a success denied them by the ordinary rules of war. They succeeded temporarily, but once the element of surprise was passed, they were beaten at their own game, and the slight advantage gained by such treacherous conduct, was nullified by the supreme bravery of the Canadians and the British Brigades round Ypres.

Trench Warfare.

Sir John French early in March had decided upon a vigorous offensive on the British front, partly for reasons stated in his dispatch of April 5th, 1915. This offensive was to be carried out in conjunction with an attack by the French between Arras and Lens. A further reason given was "the need of fostering the offensive spirit in the troops under my command after the trying and possibly enervating experiences which they had gone through of a severe winter in the trenches."(1) He had no need to worry about the "offensive spirit" of his troops, for the war diaries constantly record that "the spirit of the men remains excellent."

After four months sitting in the trenches the troops welcomed the news of a forward movement, and when the 2nd Division was warned to prepare for this attack all ranks were elated, and eager to advance.

---

(1) Sir John French's Despatch.

Digitized by Google

The 2nd South Staffords were in billets in Bethune for the early part of May, training and finding working parties. One party of 100 men, under 2nd Lieut. R. P. Phipps, was sent to do repair work at Rue de l'Epinette, the work being done under a terrific thunderstorm which did some damage to the work done.

On May 8th Brig.-General Fanshawe (C.O. 6th Infantry Brigade), held a conference of Commanding Officers at Brigade Headquarters, and explained the method of advance to be adopted by the 6th Brigade, which now consisted of six Battalions, four Line, and two Territorial Battalions.

On the morning of Sunday, May 9th, after a preliminary bombardment, the 1st Army attacked at 5.40 a.m. by a movement between Festubert and Bois Grenay. The 2nd Division (less the 4th Guards' Brigade) being in Corps Reserve, the 2nd South Staffords having moved from Le Touret to Richebourg St. Vaast.

The attack of the 1st Division, owing to the inadequate artillery preparation and the fact that the men came up against unbroken wire, was not a success, some ground was gained, but most of our gains could not be held. The 2nd Division then took over from the 1st Division, the 2nd South Staffords being in Brigade Reserve. They left Richebourg about 11 p.m. and went into bivouac behind the right of the line occupied by the Indian Corps. About 3.30 p.m. next day, May 10th, the house occupied as Battalion Headquarters was shelled, and 2nd Lieut. A. de Hamel and eight other ranks were wounded.

Next day the 6th Infantry Brigade was concentrated at Le Touret in billets.

During the night of 10/11th May, the 7th Division, which had marched down from the north, was billeted along the Rue de Bois, the 1st South Staffords being in billets at Essars, about two miles south-west of Le Touret. Both the 1st and 2nd South Staffords had a share of the Festubert fighting.

Battalion Supports Attack.

The next advance was made on Saturday, May 15th, at 11.30 p.m., and the attack was launched on the German trenches under heavy rifle and machine gun fire. The attacking Force comprised the 7th King's Liverpool Regiment, 1st Royal Berks, and the 60th Rifles. They succeeded in driving the enemy from his two front line trenches, in which these Regiments established themselves. The 2nd South Staffords were in support, and at 1 a.m. on the 16th "D" Company (South Staffords), under the command of Captain F. H. Gunner, D.S.O., moved forward to support the 60th Rifles, who had called for reinforcements, they then took over the

Digitized by Google

first line of the German trenches between R.6 and R.2, when Captain K. J. Maples was killed by a shell fragment. The remainder of the 2nd South Staffords were in A and B lines, under very heavy shell fire throughout the day, and casualties were heavy. Captains G. de C. Glover, H. S. Blockey, H. H. Sabben and F. J. Kinnaird and Lieuts. A. P. Prior, V. J. Hallam and C. E. W. Charrington being wounded.

During the day half of "C" Company (South Staffords) had been employed in carrying rations, water and bombs to the front line, no pleasant task, for the Germans were shelling the position, and trying to stop reinforcements by putting a barrage behind our lines.

At 8 p.m. the 2nd South Staffords were ordered to relieve the 60th Rifles during the night. This was done at 1 a.m. on the morning of the 17th, and at 10.30 a.m. the 2nd Battalion moved forward for the attack on Le Fme. Cour d'Avoine, supported on their left by the 5th Infantry Brigade, whose objective was the Fme. du Bois, and on their right by the 1st King's Liverpool Regiment. Unfortunately the right Battalion of the 5th Brigade failed to gain their objective. The 2nd South Staffords, who had advanced to the stream running at right angles to the line R.3 R.4, finding no support on their left, now came under severe enfilade fire from the Germans. "A" and "D" Companies of the South Staffords here sustained severe casualties. A platoon of "D" Company had pushed forward as far as Q.8 with advanced scouts up to the dyke north of Fme. Cour d'Avoine and consolidated their position. It was at this period of the attack that Lieut.-Colonel P. C. L. Routledge was killed while gallantly leading his men forward, and the Adjutant, Captain R. W. Morgan, and Lieuts. W. Hall and R. E. Hodgson were wounded.

Battle of Festubert.

During the afternoon a second attempt was made to capture the place with "B" Company leading, supported by "C" Company, who were hung up on the line R.3 R. 4. Here they held on grimly for eight hours on that bitter Sunday. Our guns and the German guns kept up a continuous deafening bombardment, shells were falling everywhere, and men were being hit in all directions, until about 7 p.m. orders were received for the troops to fall back on the line R.5 R.3, and the breastworks occupied by the 2nd South Staffords and two platoons of the 5th King's Liverpool Regiment.

Soon after daybreak on the 18th, the Sirhind Brigade (Indian Corps) arrived, but found progress impossible, and they were only able to relieve the Highland Light Infantry, so the 2nd South Staffords, instead of being relieved, continued to hold the line R.5 R3, enduring this inferno until 1.30 a.m. on May 19th, when they were relieved by the 4th and 7th

Digitized by Google

King's Liverpool Regiments, and moved into Divisional Reserve at Richebourg St. Vaast. The 6th Infantry Brigade being relieved in the evening by the 152nd Brigade, 51st Division (T.F.).

What was left of the 2nd South Staffords marched back to Bethune, billeting at Montmorency Barracks for the night. The losses of the 2nd South Staffords in the battle of Festubert were terrific, for only 130 of the Battalion, which had gone into the fight on May 15th nearly 1,000 strong, could be mustered that night.(1)

Next day, they marched *via* Choques to Allouagne, where they remained resting and refitting until the end of the month of May. While here they received a draft of 2 Officers, 2nd Lieuts. C. Dutton and W. D. Wood and 130 N.C.Os. and men, and Lieut. A. de Hamel returned to duty from hospital at Boulogne.

During their stay at Allouagne Major-General H. S. Horne, C.B., commanding the 2nd Division, paid them a visit on May 22nd and addressed them on parade. He said:—

"Colonel Davidson, Officers, N.C.Os. and men of the 2nd Battalion South Staffs. Regiment, I am here this morning to express to you all my appreciation of your conduct and bearing during the recent fighting, and to thank you for the valuable assistance you afforded not only the 6th Brigade, but the 2nd Division.

Congratulations from General H. S. Horne.

"You have undergone very great hardships during the last few days. First, moving up by night into Reserve, then the taking over from the 1st Division, and then the postponement of the attack, must have sorely tried you before the fight commenced.

"On the night of the 15th you moved up in the dark preparatory to the night attack, and although in the second line your trials and losses were equal to those of the storming party.

"Your attack would doubtless have been successful had the troops on your left been able to get forward and gain their objective.

---

(1) The total losses of the 2nd South Staffords during these three days' and nights' fighting were:—

KILLED.—Lieut.-Colonel P. C. L. Routledge, Captain K. J. Maples, and 41 other ranks.

WOUNDED.—Captains G. de C. Glover, H. S. Blockley, H. H. Sabben, F. J. Kinnaird; Captain and Adjutant R. W. Morgan; Lieuts. A. P. Prior, V. J. Hallam, C. E. W. Charrington, W. Hall, R. E. Hodgson, and 404 other ranks.

MISSING.—75 N.C.O.'s and men.

Digitized by Google

"For three days and nights you remained under a storm of rifle, shell and machine gun fire undaunted. The conduct of the South Staffordshire Regiment was splendid, and by your gallant deeds you have fully upheld and maintained the glorious traditions of your Regiment, which is so justly proud of the many Battle Honours you bear on your Colours.

"You have lost very heavily, but you can take your knocks and come up again. Your hearts are in the right place. I myself lost a very dear and personal friend, and you a very fine Officer and gallant leader, in Colonel Routledge.

"I have absolute confidence that when the 6th Brigade are fighting again, as they shortly will be, you will enter into the fray with the same dash and gallantry you have shown since the commencement of the war, and have ample opportunity of getting your own back.

"I may safely say, without boasting, that at the end of the war, the men of the South Staffordshire Regiment will not only have equalled the gallant deeds of their forebears, but have eclipsed them.

"I wish you the best of luck in the future."

The same day the 1st South Staffords, *en route* for Lillers, marched through Allouagne where they halted for some time, the men of both Battalions fraternising together, while the Officers were glad to welcome old friends again.

In Rest Billets.

During this rest period the following Officers rejoined from England:—Major L. B. Boyd-Moss, Captain A. F. Kilby, Lieut. W. P. Evans and 2nd Lieuts. A. S. R. Hughes, A. G. Thomas, A. A. Trevarthen, A. O. Johnson, F. C. Clements, M. J. Kavanagh and A. Silcock, and a further draft of 230 other ranks, making the strength of the Battalion nearly 700. Twice during this period orders were received to relieve the 58th French Division at Vermelles, but in both instances were cancelled.

On May 29th, after Divine service, which was held in a field close to Chateau Allouagne, Brig.-General R. Fanshawe, C.B., D.S.O., paid a farewell visit to the 6th Infantry Brigade on relinquishing the command. He said:—"He wished on leaving the Brigade, to thank the Brigade Staff, Commanding Officers, Officers, N.C.Os. and men of the Brigade for the way they had fought and worked during the time he had been with the Brigade. The Brigade, which he took over last September (1914), had, owing to the *esprit de corps* of all ranks in the Battalions and the careful training they had received at Aldershot, with their determination to win out here, proved itself to be either in attack or defence, one of the finest instru-

Digitized by Google

ments of war it had ever been the privilege of a General to command."

He was succeeded in the command of the 6th Infantry Brigade by Brig.-General A. C. Daly.

On May 30th the 2nd South Staffords left Allouagne and proceeded to Grenay, where the 6th Infantry Brigade relieved the 116th Brigade of the 58th Division, French Army. "C" and "D" Companies going into the trenches with "A" and "B" in Reserve.

From now onwards until the beginning of the offensive at Loos in September, 1915, the 2nd South Staffords were engaged in minor operations in the neighbourhood of Givenchy. Trench warfare was supplemented by active mining operations, and raids on the German lines.

During the month of June, when out of the trenches, they furnished fatigue parties of 300 men each, under 2nd Lieut. A. de Hamel and 2nd Lieut. M. Kavanagh, and on June 19th the 2nd South Staffords relieved the 2nd King's Royal Rifles in the Cambrin sector. "A," "C" and "B" Companies occupied the front line respectively from left to right, while "D" Company remained in support. On their right was the 2nd Coldstream Guards, and on their left the 7th King's Liverpool Regiment. **Raids and Mines.**

On June 22nd it was discovered that the Germans were mining in front of the line held by the South Staffords, and at midnight our men exploded a small counter-mine which blew in the German mine, killing and burying the enemy, for nothing more was heard of them.

Next morning at 9.30 a.m. Major L. B. Boyd-Moss sent out a party from "B" and "C" Companies, who advanced to the lip of the crater caused by the explosion, and consolidated the position. The Germans counter-attacked without success, and 2nd Lieut. W. Draycott-Wood, who was throwing bombs into a crater just in front of the line, was unfortunately killed by a sniper. The Germans shelled the position held by the 2nd South Staffords with 6 in. high explosive shells for about two hours, doing considerable damage to the front line trenches, but casualties were slight, only nine other ranks being wounded.

Mining in front of the enemy's line had been carried on continuously, and it was arranged for a series of explosions to be made on June 30th. The first mine was exploded at 5.30 p.m., and our men kept quiet in their trenches. When the second mine was exploded five minutes later, the Germans lined their parapets, and our artillery opened fire on them,

Digitized by Google

Simultaneously, our men commenced a rapid rifle fire on the Germans, accompanied with loud cheering all along the line. The enemy's fire increased in intensity, showing that their front line was reinforced by their supports, and at 5.45 p.m. the main mine was exploded, smashing up the German line and doing considerable damage to the enemy. The 2nd South Staffords' casualties were slight, being seven men killed and one wounded. Next morning an explosion took place in the German first line, throwing up huge masses of debris to a height of 26 feet, and damaging the trench for about 20 yards. It was assumed this explosion was caused by the ignition of one of the enemy's stores of ammunition. By way of retaliation the Germans again shelled the 2nd South Staffords' trenches with 6 in. high explosive shells, doing considerable damage to the parapets. Our artillery replied so successfully with mortar batteries that the enemy was forced to remain inactive. During this period the 2nd South Staffords relieved the 2nd Highland Light Infantry in B.2 section, Givenchy, where they were operating for the remainder of July. One night, "after dark, the 2nd South Staffords in B.2 gave the Germans a shaking up by bombarding their trenches opposite the 'Duck's Bill' with trench mortars and bombs thrown by the West bomb-thrower. The Germans retaliated by using vulgar and obscene language!"(1)

Trench Warfare, Cuinchy.

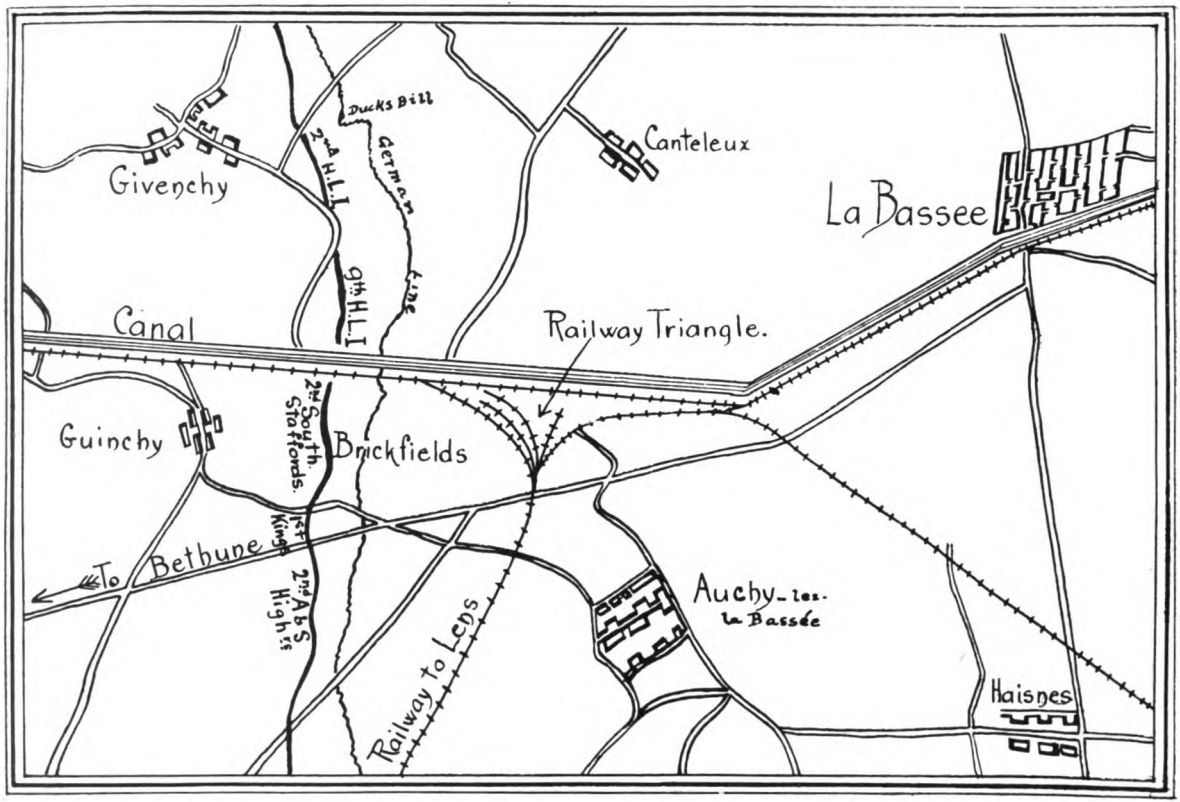
For the month of August the 2nd Battalion took over the Cuinchy section. Casualties were light, but 2nd Lieut. W. G. Fluke was wounded on the 12th August. The condition of the trenches in this section was bad, and the sick list for August and September was a heavy one, for the last week in August 114 reported sick, 56 attending sick, and 17 sent to hospitals; the first week in September showed an increase, reporting sick 168, attending sick 152, and 14 admitted to hospital. Rest billets did not improve the condition of the men. Dirty and comfortless, they had no rest anywhere. On September 4th the weather improved, and the dry spell enabled them to make the trenches more habitable, conditions became more bearable, and the health of the Battalion greatly improved, the sick list being greatly reduced.

While in the trenches from 5th to 8th September the Germans heavily shelled the rear of the line held by the 2nd Battalion, and on the 6th 2nd Lieut. F. C. Clements, who was assisting in the construction of a splinter proof shelter in one of the forward saps, was killed by a German sniper. The enemy was very active during this tour, concentrating trench mortar fire on the 2nd South Staffords' position, one bomb bursting within a few feet of 2nd Lieut. R. M. Hall, who was admitted to hospital suffering from shock.

---

(1) War Diary.

Digitized by Google



BATTLE OF LOOS, 25TH SEPTEMBER, 1915.

MAP 5.

To face p. 304

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

During the day the Germans shelled the railway embankment on the left of the South Staffords without doing much damage. Evidently the enemy knew what troops were in front of them, for about 10.30 p.m. they opened a burst of rapid fire against our lines for no apparent reason, and there was much shouting in the German trenches. Most of the shouting was in German, but several remarks were made in English, and the enemy enquired "when the South Staffords were going to charge?"

There was much heavy shelling by the Germans on September 13th, when about 20 shells, probably 18 in., fell on the brickstacks in front of the 2nd Battalion's position, doing considerable damage to brickstacks and trenches.

Next day, after some shelling in the vicinity of Cuinchy village, the Germans attempted a bombing attack on Sap 7, occupied by the 2nd South Staffords, this was easily repulsed by our bombers. On the morning of September 15th the South Staffords' miners section exploded a small mine about 2.40 a.m. just in front of the parapet, destroying a portion of the German sap and communication trenches. The Germans retaliated with light guns during the day, but the night of the 15th September was the quietest ever experienced in the trenches, for there was practically no sniping, and hardly any lights were shown by the enemy. Usually the lay of the hostile trenches could be picked out by the numerous flares twinkling in the darkness of the night.

German Bombing Attack.

It had been arranged that the Allies should make a combined attack from certain points of their line against the German entrenchments. The British had now been reinforced by the advent of the Territorial Regiments, and the new Service Battalions, to an extent that enabled them to take over a further portion of the line held by the French, and the British line now extended as far south as Lens. Unfortunately the weather again turned inclement, heavy rain falling, with the wind in the east.

On September 24th final orders for operations on a large scale, to begin on the following day, were received. Lieut.-Colonel C. S. Davidson, C.B., was recalled to England, and the command of the 2nd South Staffords was taken over by Brev. Lieut.-Colonel L. B. Boyd-Moss. Secret preparations had been going on for some time for a general offensive on the western front, in which both British and French would participate. The infantry assault was to be preceded by four days deliberate bombardment by guns of all calibres, and gas was to be used for the first time by the 2nd Division. The cylinders containing the gas had been taken up to the trenches for several nights and put into specially prepared emplace-

Digitized by Google

ments, the arrangements being made by the 186th Company Royal Engineers, the date of the attack being fixed for September 25th, but the exact hour was not known until 10 p.m. on the 24th.

The 2nd Division, consisting of the 19th Infantry Brigade on the right (which had replaced the 4th Guards Brigade, the latter having been transferred to the newly formed Guards' Division), 6th Brigade in the centre, and 5th Brigade, north of La Bassée Canal on the left, was ordered to make a main attack to the south of Cuinchy, and a subsidiary attack north of the Canal. The 6th Brigade with a strength of five Battalions placed two Battalions in the front line:—1st King's Liverpool Regiment on the right, and 2nd South Staffords on the left, supported by the 1st Herts (T.F.) and 1st Royal Berks respectively, with the 1st King's Royal Rifles in Brigade Reserve.

"The section of German line which the 2nd South Staffords was told off to attack was probably the strongest on the whole front from Ypres to Souchez.

"Between the La Bassée Canal on the north, and the main Bethune—La Bassée road on the south, the British and German lines ran through a brickfield at an average distance of 200 yards apart. On the right of our line were several groups of brickstacks, facing similar groups behind the German front trenches in which machine guns had been located. The intervening ground was broken up by a series of mine craters, chiefly made by the Germans to increase the strength of the position for defensive purposes. Saps had been run out from both front line trenches to these craters, and the occupation of these craters brought the opposing sides to within 25 yards of one another. The paths between the craters were very narrow, limiting the frontage of any attacking force to small parties of men in single file. Across this net work of mine craters, our two right Companies, 'A' and 'B' Companies, were detailed to make a direct attack against the German brickstacks which had not been subjected to heavy artillery fire for fear of shells dropping into our trenches and damaging the gas cylinders. 'C' Company on the left was to advance along the Canal towpath, its first objective being a strongly fortified work known as the Embankment Redoubt.

Battle of Loos.

"About 4 a.m. a Staff Officer of the 6th Brigade brought verbal orders that the gas would be turned on at 5.50 a.m., the assault being timed to take place at 6.30 a.m. The Royal Engineers were to explode two mines, the second of which was to be the signal for the assault. About 5.30 a.m. the Royal Engineer Officer in charge of the gas cylinders reported that the wind being unfavourable he was unwilling to assume the

Digitized by Google

responsibility of starting the gas. After some delay, owing to the telephone lines being engaged, orders were received from 6th Brigade that the programme as previously arranged was to be carried out. Meanwhile the gas had not been turned on at the appointed time, the Royal Engineer Officer having countermanded the order on his own responsibility. On receipt of these orders he turned on the gas which blew back into our own trenches and seriously affected the men who were getting into position for the assault. Many were so badly gassed as to be incapable of advancing, whilst all suffered more or less. Thus the assault was launched under circumstances 'Such as' in the words of the Brigadier, 'would have demoralised any but the staunchest and most highly disciplined troops.' Immediately the gas started the enemy lighted fires at intervals of a few yards along their front line parapets.

"To deal with the right attack first, on the signal for the assault being given, our men, nearly all of whom were suffering from the effects of the gas, rushed gallantly forward only to be met by cross fire from concealed machine guns and heavy rifle fire from the German front line trench, the enemy evidently being quite unaffected by the gas. 'A' and 'B' Companies, 2nd South Staffords, were held up on the edge of the crater nearest to their parapet and were unable to advance.

"Meanwhile 'C' Company on the left had advanced with superb gallantry along the towpath led by Captain A. F. G. Kilby and Lieuts. A. de Hamel and R. W. Fawcett. Most of the men of this Company were badly gassed before leaving our front fire trench, and on going forward were met by a murderous fire from both sides of the Canal. Captain Kilby was almost immediately wounded in the hand but continued to lead his men with the utmost gallantry right up to the enemy wire under a devastating machine gun fire, and a shower of bombs. Here he was shot down, but, although his foot had been blown off, he continued to cheer on his men and to use a rifle. He was missing afterwards and it was learned later that he had been killed.(1) Many of them actually reached the German wire which was only a few yards in front of the hostile trenches. The 5th Brigade, north of the Canal, had been unable to get forward, and our men were thus exposed to concentrated rifle and machine gun fire at very close range. A most gallant attempt to support this attack was made by 2nd Lieut. D. M. Williams, who pushed forward a machine gun close in rear of the assaulting line. He succeeded in establishing it in position on the railway embankment, where he kept the gun in action until all the team were killed except

Captain A. F. G. Kilby wins Victoria Cross.

(1) Captain A. F. G. Kilby received the posthumous award of the Victoria Cross for "most conspicuous bravery," and was also awarded the Military Cross.

Digitized by Google

himself and one other man. Lieut. D. M. Williams himself being wounded.

"Shortly after 7 a.m. Lieut.-Colonel L. B. Boyd-Moss, who was watching the attack from our front line near the Canal, and who was himself badly gassed, reported that 'C' Company had been unable to reach Embankment Redoubt and was suffering heavy losses from bombing and machine gun fire. About the same time a report was received from 2nd Lieut. D. C. James, now in command of the right Company 'A,' whose commander, Captain A. D. Johnson, had been killed, that he had reached the lip of the nearest crater where he was being heavily bombed and unable to advance further.

"The centre Company, 'B,' was also held up just in front of our parapet. 'D' Company, which had been told off to support the right attack, had now passed from our front line into one of the forward saps where the men lay down, the saps being clear of gas. The Company Commander, Captain T. W. P. Evans, crawled forward to reconnoitre, and on his return found that one platoon under 2nd Lieut. B. Hall had advanced and apparently got into the German front line. The time was now about 6.50 a.m. A report was sent to the 6th Brigade that our attack was held up at all points. About 8 a.m. orders were received to withdraw our men from the forward saps and from our front line in order that the German front line might be bombarded by heavy guns. The withdrawal of our men took place, but the artillery only bombarded the German second line trenches. At the conclusion of the bombardment Lieut.-Colonel L. B. Boyd-Moss reported that no damage had been done to the German brickstacks, and that it was quite impossible to advance against them with any hope of success. The Brigadier concurred and decided not to renew the attack. About 11.30 a.m. orders were received that the Battalion was to be relieved by the 1st Royal Berks. Regiment. Our attenuated Companies were thereupon withdrawn to support points in rear and settled down to much needed rest. Search parties of volunteers to look for wounded were organised, and as soon as it became dark they went out and brought in all the wounded who were lying out between our line and the German trenches. Excellent work was done by these men, who, in some instances, had to crawl within a few yards of the German wire.

Battle of Loos.

"About 10.30 p.m. orders came from 6th Brigade that the Battalion was again to relieve the 1st Royal Berks, who were to be withdrawn for the formation of a composite detachment which was required to deal with a fresh situation which had arisen further south. The 2nd South Staffords again took over

Digitized by Google

the line, the relief being completed at about 2 a.m. on the 26th instant."(1)

The following message, one passage of which has already been quoted was received in the afternoon of the 25th, from Brig.-General A. C. Daly, commanding 6th Infantry Brigade, and his Staff:—

" Your gallant attempt to get in the enemy's trenches this morning fills us all with admiration and we deplore your losses. The circumstances under which the attack was launched were such as would have demoralised any but the staunchest and most highly disciplined troops. Though unfortunately unsuccessful your deeds to-day add to the fine reputation you have already made for yourselves."

"After relieving the 1st Royal Berks Regiment the Battalion was disposed as follows:—'D,' 'B' and 'A' Companies in order from the right in front line and 'C' Company in support. 'A' and 'C' Companies were now commanded by 2nd Lieutenants who had been kept in Reserve during the action of the previous day. 'B' Company had 1 Captain and 1 Subaltern. 'D' Company had 1 Captain and 3 Subalterns, one of whom, 2nd Lieut. M. J. Kavanagh, was at once sent to take charge of the machine guns, now reduced to three, as the gun taken forward by 2nd Lieut. D. M. Williams was not recovered. The day passed quietly. In the evening a draft of 50 men arrived from the base, all of whom were posted to 'C' Company.

"The Companies remained in the positions of the previous day. Arms and equipment of killed and wounded were collected and sent back throughout the day. About 3 p.m. the Adjutant was hurriedly summoned to Brigade Headquarters, where information had been received that the enemy had retaken an important position about 1½ miles to the south,

---

(1) Battalion War Diary.

In this engagement the Battalion suffered severely, losing:—
KILLED.—1 Officer, 19 other ranks.
WOUNDED.—4 Officers, 79 other ranks.
MISSING.—4 Officers, 31 other ranks.
DIED OF WOUNDS.—1 Officer.
SUFFERING FROM GAS POISONING.—130 other ranks.

The following Officers went into action on September 25th, 1915:—Lieut.-Colonel L. B. Boyd-Moss; Major R. W. Morgan; Captain A. F. G. Kilby (wounded and missing—killed), Captain B. T. G. Trunton, Captain T. W. P. Evans, Captain A. D. Johnson (killed); Lieut. A. de Hamel (wounded), Lieut. R. P. Phipps; 2nd Lieuts. W. H. Carter, W. G. Fluke, C. W. King (killed and missing), B. Hall (missing), D. M. Williams, M.C. (wounded and missing—killed), D. C. James (wounded and missing), R. W. Fawcett (died of wounds), A. Silcock (wounded), J. M. Edgar (wounded).

Digitized by Google

which we had captured on the 25th. A fresh attack was being organised by the 1st Corps, and we were ordered to co-operate by a gas attack, advancing if possible. The gas was to start at 5 p.m., and the attack half an hour later. Arrangements were hastily made, but when the time arrived the experts again refused to turn on the gas owing to the direction of the wind. When the gas was finally expended patrols were sent out to ascertain if it had any effect on the enemy. The German fires again appeared on their front line trench as soon as the gas was turned on, and they kept up a heavy fire the whole time. The patrols reported that some Germans were wearing smoke helmets and others had respirators on, which were rolled up. As the gas was again quite ineffective no infantry advance was made. Rain fell in the evening and during the night. There was a certain amount of shelling of our trenches throughout the day, the men being kept busy repairing breaches and cleaning up trenches. Orders were received from the 6th Brigade Headquarters that the cylinders would be emptied of remaining gas in the afternoon. All preparations were made to get men under cover from the shell fire to which our trenches would probably be subjected, and machine guns and snipers told off to pick off any of the enemy who should expose themselves, but the order was eventually cancelled."(1)

Trench Warfare.

Next day it rained again and the trenches became very wet and muddy, there was intermittent shelling by the Germans throughout the day, but only four men were wounded.

On September 30th the weather cleared, fine, but cold, and about noon orders were received that the 6th Infantry Brigade would be relieved in the evening by the 58th Brigade, 19th Division. The relief was very much delayed owing to a heavy rainfall, and was not completed till about midnight, when the 2nd South Staffords marched independently by Companies back to billets in Bethune.

Although the 2nd South Staffords had made this gallant but fruitless attempt against the Railway Triangle, their work had effected its purpose. It had detained considerable German Forces which would otherwise have been used against our Armies attacking the Hohenzollern Redoubt. Where there are large concerted movements as in this attack, the troops who have to fight containing battles have the most difficult task. There is not much glory to be won from their work, for they are fighting for someone else to win, but without their help the others could not achieve the success they did. In this case the artillery preparation was insufficient to break up the heavy German wire, and supports were unavailable, and

(1) War Diary.

Digitized by Google

the 2nd South Staffords, after gaining part of their objective and enduring a perfect tornado of fire, were so thinned that withdrawal to their original trenches was necessary to save them from being annihilated. The cause of their failure is not to be found in any defect of the human material, nor in the leading of their Officers.

They left Bethune on October 1st for Vermelles, passing through Beuvry, where they were held up for nearly an hour by a block of troops and traffic moving in all directions. On arrival they went into Brigade Reserve, taking over the Reserve trenches from the 1st York and Lancaster Regiment. During this tour of duty, the weather was fine, aircraft on both sides was very active, and the Germans made several bombing attacks on the 2nd South Staffords' trenches, but were everywhere repulsed. On the 8th October an expected German counter-attack was made at Vermelles, and the 6th Infantry Brigade was sent to Beuvry to be in readiness. Heavy gunfire had been continuous all the afternoon, but gradually died away, and as the German attack had failed, the 2nd Battalion returned to Bethune, where they remained training and refitting until October 14th. During this period Lieut.-Colonel L. B. Boyd-Moss introduced a system of blocking trenches against bombing attacks, in which the men were specially trained. Brig.-General A. C. Daly had the system submitted to him, and was so impressed that he ordered its adoption throughout the whole of the 6th Brigade. About 5 p.m. on October 13th the area immediately surrounding the 2nd South Staffords received five heavy shells, one of which burst in the road just in front of the Battalion billets, wrecking two houses and smashing all the glass in the windows of the billets. The men were immediately sent away to other parts of the town in small parties, returning later when all was quiet. These shells were fired from an 11 in. Krupp mortar and fell at regular intervals of five minutes.(1) Next day they moved to fresh training quarters at Annezin, but were back at Cuinchy again on trench duty on October 21st, remaining in this section for the rest of the month.

Resting and Refitting.

After the great battle of Loos which began on September 25th and lasted till the beginning of November, the Armies settled down to a series of local attacks and counter-attacks. The weather was bad, and in spite of considerable improvement in the trenches, in the water-logged areas of Festubert and Givenchy, the work of pumping and repairing the trenches was unceasing. The parapets crumbled after an hour's rain and dissolved into liquid mud, the men were wet from the moment they entered the trenches until they got back to billets.

(1) Casualties were :—3 killed, 9 wounded and 2 missing.

Digitized by Google

As one Officer said, "It was scraping the mud off when in billets, only to get plastered up again on return to the trenches," but this was a small matter compared to the verminous condition of the trenches and billets, for all clothing had to be boiled and thoroughly disinfected, but even these precautions, while checking the evil, could not eradicate the filthy conditions of trench life.

On October 27th, Lieut.-Colonel L. B. Boyd-Moss was sent for to take over the command of the 20th Infantry Brigade, whose Commander, Brig.-General Hon. J. F. Trefusis, D.S.O., had been killed a few days previously, and Major R. W. Morgan assumed command of the Battalion, Lieut. R. P. Phipps being appointed Acting Adjutant.

Previous to leaving the trenches after this tour, it was observed that a white cross had appeared in front of the German lines near the railway embankment on the extreme left of the line held by the 2nd South Staffords, and a message received from the 1st King's Liverpool Regiment, who had relieved them, stated that the cross bore an inscription which read as follows:—"For King and Fatherland. In memory of Lieut. King and Lieut. Hall and eight men of the South Staffordshire Regiment who died like heroes. Erected by O.S.P.A.R."(1) This refers to two of the missing Officers who fell in the fierce fighting near the embankment redoubt, and shows that the Germans were not all lacking the spirit of chivalry and respect for brave men.

Inspection by H.M. King George V.

On October 28th there was a big inspection by H.M. the King, of representative units of the 1st Army, which now consisted of the 2nd and 7th Divisions. For this inspection the 2nd South Staffords was specially selected as one of the units to represent the 2nd Division, while the 1st South Staffords was similarly chosen to represent the 7th Division. The inspection was held at Hesdigneul, Brig.-General G. E. Corkran, C.M.G., was in command of the parade, the troops being:—

1st Batt. Scottish Rifles (19th Infantry Brigade)
2nd Batt. Worcestershire Regt. (5th Infantry Brigade)
1st Batt. King's Royal Rifles (detachment) } 6th Inf.
2nd Batt. South Staffs. Regt. } Brigade
2nd Batt. Border Regt. (21st Infantry Brigade)
1st Batt. South Staffs. Regt. (22nd Infantry Brigade)

with detachments of Yeomanry, Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers. The infantry were drawn up in quarter column on a piece of ground north-west of La Buissierre—Hesdigneul road.

(1) War Diary.

Digitized by Google

His Majesty was received with a Royal Salute, and then rode down the line. Afterwards the King presented the V.C. to Captain C. C. Foss, D.S.O. (Bedfordshire Regiment) for conspicuous bravery at Neuve Chapelle. After the presentation His Majesty left the parade ground, the troops giving three cheers as he rode away. Rain had been threatening all the morning, and commenced to fall heavily, drenching the troops as they marched back to billets.

This occasion may well be regarded as historic in the annals of the South Staffordshire Regiment, both Battalions being specially selected by reason of their records in two different Divisions, for the honour of appearing before their Sovereign at a representative parade almost within sight of the fields on which their laurels had been won. The following Officers of the 2nd South Staffords were present:—

Major R. W. Morgan, Commanding 2nd Battalion.
Lieut. R. P. Phipps, Acting Adjutant.

"A" Company—
2nd Lieut. W. H. Carter
,, M. J. Cavanagh
,, A. P. Prior
,, W. H. Orrow

"B" Company—
Lieut. H. P. Keary
2nd Lieut. W. R. G. Benson
,, J. West

"C" Company—
2nd Lieut. A. J. L. Pritchard
,, H. Chapman
,, J. Berry
,, J. H. Powell

"D" Company—
Capt. T. W. P. Evans
2nd Lieut. W. G. Fluke
,, S. Caldwell
,, T. P. Reed
,, S. H. Smith

Two days afterwards the 2nd South Staffords were back again in the trenches at Cuinchy, where they relieved the 1st King's R.R.C. The weather continued bad, rain falling without a break for days. The trenches collapsed as fast as they were built up. Moving about in this morass of mud and slush made life unbearable, and the sickness in the Battalion showed a considerable increase for the month of October. The month's total being 493 reporting sick, 455 attending sick, while 79 were admitted to hospital.

Trench Warfare.

Fortunately the enemy did not display any great activity on the South Staffords' front, otherwise, their ranks were too thinned by sickness to have been of much use to repel an attack in force. They were shelled by the Germans frequently, but the condition of the ground caused the shells to sink in the soft mud without exploding. Fatigue parties were the order of the day when in rest billets, but the men, in spite of the wretched conditions of existence, maintained their cheerful spirit and gave the enemy little rest when in the trenches.

Digitized by Google

The month of November was passed in the same dreary round of trench duty, and the weather turning frosty for several days helped the work of repairing parapets. Mining was carried on by the Tunnelling Company, and, at about 6.45 a.m. on November 22nd a mine was exploded in front of the trench, forming a crater about 30 yards in front of the fire trench. The farther lip of this crater was at once occupied by the 2nd Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders (19th Infantry Brigade), who were holding this front and had run a sap a distance of about 20 yards out to it. This crater was called "Gibson's Crater," from a Corporal Gibson, who with a few men had first occupied it and begun the work of consolidation.

Next day the 2nd South Staffords relieved the Highlanders and the work of consolidating the crater was continued.

"Gibson's Crater."

They were shelled by German heavy howitzers, but no damage was done. The South Staffords strongly suspected that the enemy was counter-mining under the northern lip of "Gibson's Crater," but no confirmation could be obtained until about 4.30 p.m., when all doubt was shattered by the explosion of a German mine directly under "Gibson's Crater," burying the whole of the garrison, consisting of one Officer and 24 other ranks, excepting two men who were blown some distance away and killed. 2nd Lieut. A. P. Prior, who was in command of "A" Company, at once began the work of rescue, and six men who had been partially buried were dug out, but of the two Officers, 2nd Lieuts. J. H. Powell and S. H. Smith, and 13 other ranks, "no trace of them could be found."(1)

2nd Lieut. W. H. Carter, who was sent up from Battalion Headquarters, immediately organised a fresh bombing party and occupied the lip of the crater, where bombing was continued throughout the night. Meanwhile the crater itself was subjected to a heavy fire of rifle grenades by the Germans, and 2nd Lieuts. A. P. Prior and W. H. Carter were slightly wounded. 2nd Lieut. F. P. S. Burnett was also wounded by a rifle grenade. About 9.30 p.m. a sudden shower of bombs and rifle grenades caused this party of the 2nd South Staffords to evacuate the crater, which was immediately reoccupied by a party led by 2nd Lieut. C. R. Hind, 3rd South Staffs., and Lce.-Corporal Conn, 1st King's R.R.C., who were attached to the 6th Brigade Grenade Company. Bombing and fierce fighting continued until about 1 a.m., when the 2nd South Staffords "threw a shower of bombs round the crater, directly after which two reconnoitring parties worked round the crater and reported that no Germans could be found." The remainder of the night passed quietly, and until relieved by

(1) War Diary.

Digitized by Google

the 1st King's Liverpool Regiment on the 26th the gallant defenders of "Gibson's Crater" remained in possession.(1)

From now until the end of 1915 the South Staffords were operating in sub-section Z0. Vermelles. Rain fell abundantly during November, followed by snow at the end of the month. While in this area they were working every night constructing new dug-outs for Battalion Headquarters and Regimental aid posts, but progress was slow. Great difficulty was experienced in getting up materials to the front line, not only owing to the distance they had to be carried, but because of the condition of the ground. Work was incessant, but the Winter of 1915 was spent under more favourable conditions than the appalling one of 1914, round Ypres and in the salient. Flooring boards now appeared in the trenches, sump pits were constructed and pumps fixed for emptying them of water. Bombardment by our own artillery was reciprocated by the Germans who, knowing the ground, were continually shelling the back areas, and this interfered badly with bringing up supplies to the front line troops. Systematic raiding of the German trenches was in full swing, and by this means, much loss was caused to the enemy, as well as shaking up his *morale*.

Christmas at Annezin.

The 2nd Battalion celebrated their second Christmas Day at Annezin, under more pleasurable conditions than they experienced in 1914. The billets were more comfortable, and in rear of the lines amusement huts had been provided which all helped to alleviate the awful mental and physical strain suffered by the men when in the trenches. On Christmas Day all training was suspended for the day, and Divine Service was held at 11 a.m. Arrangements were made to give the men as good a dinner as possible, but as no room was available large enough to accommodate the whole Battalion, "A" and "C" Companies had their dinner in separate rooms in the School, while "B" and "D" Companies had theirs in estaminets kindly lent for the occasion. No room being large enough for all the Officers, Headquarters and "A" and "B" Officers dined together in one mess, and Officers of "C" and "D" in another. The health of H.M. the King was drunk, followed by the health of Lieut.-General Sir Charles Tucker, G.C.B., Colonel of the Regiment.

---

(1) The 2nd Battalion suffered the following casualties :—

KILLED.—2nd Lieuts. J. H. Powell and S. H. Smith, and 23 other ranks.

WOUNDED.—2nd Lieuts. E. P. S. Burnett, W. H. Carter, A. P. Prior, and 33 other ranks.

2nd Lieuts. Carter and Prior, although slightly wounded, remained at duty the whole time.

Digitized by Google

The 6th Infantry Brigade was now reorganised as follows:—

Brig.-General A. C. Daly in command.
1st King's Liverpool Regiment.
2nd South Staffordshire Regiment (Lieut.-Colonel R. W. Morgan, C.O.).
1st Herts Regiment (T.F.).
17th Middlesex Regiment.
13th Essex Regiment.

On the 19th December Field-Marshal Sir J. D. P. French, G.C.B., O.M., G.C.V.O., K.C.M.G., the British Commander-in-Chief, relinquished his command of the Army in France and returned to England, and was succeeded by General Sir Douglas Haig, G.C.B., K.C.I.E., K.C.V.O., who held this command until the final victory was won.

Digitized by Google

RECORD OF THE 2ND BATTALION, 1916.

In Flanders—Sports—La Bassée Area—In the Lens Area—Trench Warfare—Raiding the German Trenches—Vimy Ridge—The Somme Battles—Attack on Guillemont—With the Fifth Corps—Trench Warfare —Battle of the Ancre—Resting and Training.

DURING the month of January, 1916, while the Battalion was in the rest camp at Busnes, the daily routine of training was relieved by the first round of the Brigade Boxing Tournament, and on January 7th the Battalion played the 1st King's Liverpool Regiment in the 6th Brigade Tie of the Divisional Football Tournament, the result being: 2nd South Staffords, 3 goals; 1st King's, nil.

A draft of 56 other ranks joined the Battalion on January 8th, about a dozen of whom had previously served in France. The physique of the men was good, and their average age about 26 years. By this time the Battalion was practically re-formed, and few were left of the veterans of 1914. The depleted ranks had been constantly filled by new drafts, men of fine material and well trained. Most of the Officers and men were new to the Battalion, but there was still a leaven of the old ones left to inspire the new men with the traditions and *esprit de corps* of the famous old 80th. The same day that the new draft arrived saw the finals in the Brigade Boxing Tournament, and both semi-finals in the light and heavy weights were won by the Battalion, Corpl. F. Lea winning the light weight, and Pte. G. Palin had a walk-over in the heavy weight.

Re-organising the Battalion.

On the 10th January, the following Officers joined the Battalion:—Major G. A. S. Williams (from 4th South Staffs. Regiment), Captain C. W. Kortwright (3rd Special Reserve, North Staffs. Regiment), Captain G. E. Ram (4th Special Reserve, North Staffs. Regiment), Lieut. C. Dutton, and 2nd Lieut. W. Lake, on promotion from the ranks of the East Surrey Regiment, and were posted as follows:—Major G. A. S. Williams, Second in Command; Captain C. W. Kortwright and Lieut. C. Dutton to "A" Company; Captain G. E. Ram, "C" Company, and 2nd Lieut. W. Lake to "D" Company.

The Final Tie of the 6th Brigade in the Divisional Football Tournament was played the same day, the South Staffords

Digitized by Google

being opposed by the 17th Middlesex Regiment (Footballers' Battalion), with the result that the Staffords lost by 6 goals to nil. As the Middlesex team was almost entirely composed of International and First League players, the result was scarcely surprising.

On January 13th, 2nd Lieut. W. H. Carter proceeded to England to receive from H.M. the King the Military Cross awarded to him for his work at Cambrin, South of La Bassée. The Battalion remained in the Reserve area training continuously, until a high standard of efficiency was reached, and on January 16th they were moved to Le Quesnoy, on the 2nd Division relieving the 12th Division in the 1st Corps line, the South Staffords taking over the line held by the 5th Royal Berks Regiment.

The Brigade line at Givenchy was held by the 1st King's Liverpool Regiment and the South Staffords, with the 1st Hertfords (T.F.) in support. On the left of the 6th Brigade line was the 99th Brigade, which had replaced the 19th Brigade in November of 1915, and now formed part of the 2nd Division.

Trench Warfare.

The line held by the right Company of the South Staffords included three saps, I, J, K, the sapheads being on the lip of mine craters, the Germans holding the further lip about fifty yards away. For the four days the Battalion held this position they were subjected to intermittent bombing and active shelling by trench mortars, but fortunately with little injury. On January 20th, the enemy exploded a small mine about thirty yards in front of K sap, blowing up one of our mine galleries, and burying six men of the 176th Tunnelling Company, R.E. Prompt attempts were made to rescue the entombed men, but the explosion resulted in the death of one R.E. Officer. Two other R.E. Officers and several men, including two stretcher-bearers of "D" Company, were sent to hospital suffering from the effects of mine gas. For the rest of the day the Germans shelled the support area.

On relief by the 13th Essex Regiment, the South Staffords went into the support trenches near Givenchy village, and later to rest billets in Le Quesnoy. During this tour in the trenches, the Battalion, in spite of drafts received, was very weak, the constant drain on the men of the Infantry Battalions having reduced the effective strength to about half the number actually on the strength of the Companies.

Lieut.-Colonel R. W. Morgan, D.S.O., left on leave for England on the 24th January, and Major G. A. S. Williams took over command. Two days later, being the German Emperor's birthday, it was noticed there was some activity

Digitized by Google

at enemy rail-heads, and the Battalion received orders to be ready to move at short notice. All preparations were made, but the night passed quietly. Next day, the Battalion was back in the trenches again, at Windy Corner.

Early in the morning of 28th January, the Battalion successfully exploded a mine in front of their position, which did considerable damage to the enemy, one result being to partially fill the South Staffords' front line with *débris* from the explosion. About 10 a.m., the Germans opened a furious bombardment on the "Village Line" with high explosive and shrapnel, with guns of all calibres up to 5.9. Our Artillery vigorously replied, with excellent results, the bombardment continuing intermittently until 4 p.m.

Subsequently it became known that the Germans had made a bombing attack further South, near the Hohenzollern Redoubt, which was repulsed.

During this afternoon, 2nd Lieut. A. F. V. A. Trevarthen, who had been attached to the 2/2nd Trench Mortar Battery for six months, was killed by a trench mortar bomb.

In La Bassée Area.

The night of 28th/29th January was quite calm in front of the Battalion, although there was considerable activity at other points further South along the line. During the night, 7241 C.S.M. Jardine was killed whilst extinguishing a fire in a dug-out.

The last three days of January, 1916, were foggy and misty, and nothing unusual occurred. A great number of patrols were sent out between the lines, and about 5 p.m. on the 30th a German patrol was observed by the Lewis gun section coming towards them through the fog, but a few bursts from the Lewis gunners soon sent them scuttling back to their own lines.

The section of the line held by the Battalion in the support area was fairly quiet, although heavy bombardment of the line some miles further South was continuous. On relief by the 1st King's Royal Rifle Corps, the Battalion went into billets in the tobacco factory, Bethune. These billets had now been greatly improved by installing electric light fittings, so that the comfort of the men was greater than the discomfort they had endured before.

During their rest period in Bethune, the Battalion carried out strict training—route marches, and found working parties for the R.E.'s in repair work to the trenches. During this period of rest, a Battalion Sniping Section was organised, and eight men specially selected practised firing with telescopic sights, under Lieut. W. H. Carter, M.C.

Digitized by Google

The 2nd Division was moved about in this area, until the final preparations for the great Somme battles, which began on July 1st, 1916. The work entailed meant tremendous labour—"scores of miles of deep communication trenches had to be dug, as well as trenches for telephone wires, assembly and assault trenches, and numerous gun emplacements and observation posts.

"Much of this preparatory work had to be done under trying conditions, and was liable to constant interruption from the enemy's fire. The weather, on the whole, was bad, and the local accommodation totally insufficient for housing the troops employed, who consequently had to content themselves with such rough shelter as could be provided in the circumstances. *All this labour, too, had to be carried out in addition to fighting*, and to the everyday work of maintaining existing defences. It thus threw a very heavy strain upon the troops, which was borne by them with a cheerfulness beyond all praise."(1)

Preparation for the Somme Battles.

The part played in this preparation by the 2nd South Staffords is shown in the following notes from their War Diary.

On the 11th February, the Battalion moved to Le Touret, relieving the 24th Royal Fusiliers. This move was made in order to relieve the 5th Infantry Brigade in the Festubert Section (C Section) by the 6th Infantry Brigade. The front line the South Staffords took over consisted of "Islands," or isolated breastworks, with a garrison varying from 7 to 13 men in each. Some 600 yards in rear of these "Islands" was the old British line, formerly the British front line before the offensive of May, 1915.

These front line "Islands" were only accessible at night, and all relieving had to be done across the open ground. The garrisons, therefore, had to take enough rations and water for 24 hours. The old British line was a continuous breastwork, and the distance of the German front line from the "Islands" varied from 150 to about 300 yards. The "Islands" in this sub-section were divided into a right and left group, each of 6 "Islands." "C" Company held the right group, while "D" Company found garrisons for the left group. The Battalion held this position until 19th February. During this period, three Subaltern Officers—2nd Lieuts. E. H. Harper, T. P. Peed, and A. P. Whitehead—were sent from the Battalion to join the 8th (Service) Battalion, South Staffords, which had suffered heavy losses in the recent German attack on Ypres.

(1) Sir Douglas Haig's Despatch, 23rd December, 1916.

Digitized by Google

On 24th February, the 1st Herts. Regiment (T.F.) left the 6th Infantry Brigade to be attached to General Headquarters, and on February 25th it was arranged that the 2nd Division should relieve the 18th French Division in the sector further South in front of Loos. The Battalion paraded at 8.15 a.m., and marched to Bully Grenay, about 12 miles. The day was very cold, and heavy snow fell during the march. On arrival, the Battalion went into the support area in Cite Calonne. where all the men were housed in cellars, many of which contained beds and furniture—a welcome change from the billets they had vacated. 2nd Lieuts. H. G. Tate and J. A. Russell joined the Battalion, which was now all together.

During this tour, the weather improved, and there was great aircraft activity, both British and German planes being up. While in the support area, the enemy shelled Bully Grenay daily, searching for the reliefs which he evidently knew were on the way up, but there were no casualties. The line held by the Battalion was very long—"A" Company on the right, "B" Company in the centre placed all four platoons in the front line, and "D" Company on the left with two platoons in front line and two in support. The trenches were in a very bad condition—no work apparently had been done to repair them—and to add to the men's discomfort snow fell heavily during the night of 3rd/4th March, so that they gladly welcomed the relief by the 1st King's Liverpool Regiment. In Cite Calonne.

Mining and counter-mining was active on both sides, and our miners having satisfied themselves that the Germans were mining a short distance in front of "D" Company's (centre Company) lines, arrangements were made to clear the front line trench and leave two sentry and groups and one bombing party in the fire trench. At the same time a strong party of grenadiers and consolidation workers was organised on each flank in readiness to occupy the crater should the Germans spring a mine. No mines were exploded, but by March 12th a strong second line in rear of the mined area had been completed. On the 15th March Captains C. Kortwright and G. E. Ram, Lieut. R. P. Phipps, and 2nd Lieut. W. G. Fluke were admitted to hospital.

The 2nd Division was now permanently transferred to the Fourth Corps, and on 18th March the Battalion left Hersin and marched through Bruay to Camblain Chatelaine, about 11 miles further South, where the 2nd Division took over the Angres—Calonne sectors (South of Loos) from the 18th French Division. In this sector the 2nd Division was opposed by the German 17th Reserve Division, an old opponent of theirs.

On the 21st March, the Battalion took part in a Brigade parade for inspection by General Sir H. H. Wilson, K.C.B.

Digitized by Google

(General Officer Commanding 4th Corps). The strength of the Battalion on this parade was 15 Officers and 490 other ranks.

The weather continued very unsettled and interfered with the training, but working parties were constantly found by the Battalion, one party, under 2nd Lieut. A. J. Bell, being sent to Pernes, and another party, under Captain G. D. Perrin, were conveyed on motor lorries to Bouvigny, where they were employed on a second line trench system. Snow and rain fell heavily for the rest of the month. On the 25th March, a draft of 19 other ranks arrived from the Base, all of whom had previously served in the Battalion during the War. Lieut. R. P. Phipps rejoined from hospital and was posted to "D" Company, and on March 27th Lieut.-Colonel H. E. Walshe, C.M.G., left the Battalion to take over the command of the 24th Royal Fusiliers, and Lieut.-Colonel R. W. Morgan, D.S.O., assumed command.

In the Trenches at Calonne.

The month of April opened with fine weather and brilliant sunshine, and the Battalion was alternately either in the trenches or in rest billets the whole month. On April 12th, the Battalion moved to Camblain Chatelaine, buffeted by a strong North-west wind and heavy rain during the march there. Next day they moved to the First Army training area at Bomy, a village beautifully situated in a valley surrounded by woods, about 10 miles South-west of Aire. Here, until April 17th, they remained training in Battalion and Brigade manœuvres, and in an attack on an entrenched position—all the troops in the training area being so employed.

On April 18th, they relieved the 11th Northumberland Fusiliers in sub-section Calonne South. They had the 2nd Highland Light Infantry on their right and the 13th Essex Regiment on their left. The weather was very wet, and the right Company's trenches soon filled with water. During this tour of the trenches, Captain G. D. Perrin was slightly wounded by a shell splinter on April 20th, near Battalion Headquarters, and Captain W. E. Wansbrough, who had joined the previous day from England, took over command of "B" Company. A German trench mortar blew in a cellar, burying eight men, and it took four and a half hours to rescue them.

They were relieved by the 1st King's Liverpool Regiment on the 22nd April, and went into billets at Bully Grenay. Working parties were found daily, and while here a special Bombing Section was formed, under 2nd Lieut. S. T. Spicer, who was appointed Bombing Officer. By means of trench maps and air photographs, targets and ranges were adjusted, and the men became so efficient that, during their next tour

Digitized by Google

in the front line, they retaliated with such success that the German rifle grenade fire was almost entirely silenced. On April 27th, the wind being favourable, the Germans loosed a gas attack on the 6th Brigade front; but on the alarm being given, the troops stood to arms, and gas helmets were put on. The gas was felt very slightly, and helmets were only worn for about an hour. At the same time, a large pile of pit props on a slagheap on the extreme left of the Battalion line burst into flames, the fire extending to a dug-out close by, and continuing throughout the day. The Germans vigorously shelled the ground and the fire, but did not make any infantry attack. The Battalion's casualty list was very slight, chiefly from shell fire, as the Germans fired big guns from the direction of Lens, which enfiladed the British trenches.

During the early days of May, a raid on the German trenches was made by the 2nd South Staffords, who for several days had been practising on facsimile trenches while in reserve billets. The South Staffords relieved the 1st King's Liverpool Regiment on May 12th, and were heavily bombarded by the German artillery for about an hour at mid-day. Heavy rain fell during the morning of May 13th, and the trenches—in places where there were no trench boards or good sump-pits—soon became seas of mud. Next day, final preparations were made for the raid, which was carried out at 12 midnight. Zero hour had not been definitely fixed, but the men were ordered to be ready in the front line at 11 p.m. Before attempting the raid, two patrols had been out to ascertain if any listening posts were out in front, and to report on the condition of the German wire. 2nd Lieut. T. H. Searls and Corpl. Sadler patrolled the road sap at 10.30 p.m., and reported "all quiet" in this section. 2nd Lieut. J. L. Malpas and Sergt. Rowledge reconnoitred Railway sap, and, working from shell crater to crater, crawled up to within 20 yards of the German sap, where they saw two Germans in a crater about 15 yards in front of the sap. These men appeared to have some means of communication with the sap itself. No other Germans were seen. Unfortunately, neither of these patrols got near enough to ascertain the state of the wire in front of the German trenches.

Trench Warfare. Raids.

Arrangements had been made for Artillery support for the raid, and at 11.50 p.m. both parties left our front line by previously constructed exits. Machine gun fire was kept up on the saps until midnight, and Very lights were fired at intervals, while the men were creeping forward to the enemy line.

The position to be raided was directly in front of the road from the British trenches, and consisted of a sap driven out

Digitized by Google

in front and three traverses from the German main trench, the road running at right-angles to the trench.

One party, under 2nd Lieut. Caldwell, was to attack the road sap; the other party, under 2nd Lieut. H. G. Tate, were to attack Railway Sap. Both parties arranged by signal for the assault to be simultaneous, but 2nd Lieut. Caldwell, seeing that the German wire in front of him was a formidable obstacle, waited for the pre-arranged signal from the other party. After waiting about twenty minutes, he heard bombs and revolver shots on his left, in the direction of Railway Sap. Thinking the other party had got into the German trench, he at once advanced. The party had great difficulty in making an entry through the heavy wire, and a few bombs were thrown into the sap, which was found unoccupied. Two blocking parties were at once sent forward, right and left. On entering the main fire trench, followed by the main trench bombing party, these were just starting to work up the trench when a series of whistle blasts were heard. Thinking this was the signal for the left party to leave the trench, the right party also retired, after being about seven minutes in the trench. During this time one dug-out in the sap and two in the main fire trench were bombed. 2nd Lieut. Caldwell, two N.C.O.'s and 18 men of his party having penetrated about twenty yards into the German trenches on either side of the sap, on leaving the sap several bombs were thrown at the party and rifle shots were fired, but the Germans, owing to the surprise effected, were too flurried to aim accurately, and only four men were slightly grazed by splinters.

Raid on German Trench.

The other party, under 2nd Lieut. H. G. Tate, attacking Railway Sap, were not so successful, for owing to the fact that they had to crawl over in the open, they were detected before they could get near enough to enter the trenches. Surprise was now out of the question, and this party hearing whistles blown, and thinking it was the withdrawal signal of the right party, they returned. One man became detached and did not return till an hour after the others got back, when he reported that he saw two Germans in the sap, and had thrown bombs at them. Unfortunately, on their return, a few rifle grenades were fired at them, killing a sergeant of the party.

The difficulty of exercising control over simultaneous attacks at different points was really responsible for the lack of success in this raid; and the fact that one party had to crawl in the open, where the lights sent up by the Germans showed them distinctly, made surprise almost impossible. The behaviour of the men was splendid; they were all volunteers, and meant getting into the German trench if possible, and knew exactly what to do when they got there.

Digitized by Google

Next day, the Germans retaliated by shelling the South Staffords' lines, causing a few casualties. The same evening enemy aeroplanes came over, dropping bombs on the trenches, and green lights on the gun positions.

On the 17th May, Captain G. Dawes and 2nd Lieut. W. G. Boycott joined the 2nd Battalion from England, and Lieut.-Colonel R. W. Morgan going on leave to England, Lieut.-Colonel A. J. Richardson took over the command; and on May 22nd they were ordered to move, at an hour's notice, to the Vimy Ridge area, where the British had begun an attack designed to capture the Ridge, which was high ground commanding our positions at Arras. The Germans had counter-attacked and gained a small advantage, but it was of no strategic or tactical importance. On arrival at Gouy Servins the Battalion was in Corps Reserve with the 6th Infantry Brigade, and on May 25th the South Staffords took over the line in the Northern sphere of Vimy Ridge from the 22nd and 24th Battalions, London Regiment (T.F.).

The trenches in this section were in an awful condition, owing to the German bombardment, for the enemy was very active with minenwerfers and rifle grenades, to which our men vigorously replied with Stokes mortar bombs and rifle grenade fire, effectively silencing the German fire.

Attack on "Momber's Crater."

On the 28th May, instructions were received from the Divisional Commander, Major-General W. G. Walker, V.C., C.B., that the neighbourhood of Momber Crater was to be reconnoitred with a view to regaining the old trench captured by the Germans. 2nd Lieut. J. A. Russell was detailed for this duty, and both the Commanding Officer and the Adjutant also reconnoitred the locality, with the result that Colonel Richardson wrote to the Brig.-General commanding the 6th Brigade that the wire made an attack impossible. The same evening urgent instructions were received from the General Staff to attempt to regain the lost trench. A plan of operations was arranged and attacking parties were formed, under 2nd Lieuts. C. R. Hind and J. Beech. The German wire had been bombarded by the Trench Mortar Battery, and at 10.30 p.m. the attacking parties moved up to the barricade near Momber's Crater. They were followed by two platoons of "C" Company, two Lewis guns, and the sapping platoon. No sooner were a few men "over the top" than the Germans opened a heavy fire with machine guns and rifles. Before all the attacking party could leave the sap, somebody (unknown) gave the word to "Get back," and some of the men returned to the sap, where they were kept by the Adjutant to hold the barricade until its usual defenders returned. On the right, 2nd Lieut. R. G.

Digitized by Google

Boycott attempted to advance up Gobron trench, but failed. Further to the right, 2nd Lieut. R. Berry pushed up Hartung trench and got into the old trench. His men afterwards retired, but he stopped, presumably to cover their retreat, and did not return. On his right, 2nd Lieut. J. Bell forced his way up Ersatz trench. Making a feint attack, he got into contact with the enemy, but withdrew in safety. Thus the main attack failed. Later, some batteries of our Artillery put up a barrage behind the German front lines, who replied by putting a barrage on Zouave Valley behind our lines. So many flares were lighted by the Germans that it was almost impossible to bring in our wounded. The Adjutant, Lieut. W. H. Carter, M.C., watched all night for an opportunity to bring in any wounded or dead, and at dawn on May 30th, helped by 2nd Lieut. J. R. Malpass, he brought in the body of 2nd Lieut. C. R. Hind. Our casualties in this unsuccessful attack were:—2nd Lieut. C. R. Hind, killed; 2nd Lieut. J. Beech, wounded, and 2nd Lieut. J. Berry, missing, with three other ranks killed and four wounded. The body of 2nd Lieut. J. Berry was recovered and brought in after dark on June 4th, and buried in Zouave Valley.

Trench Warfare.

Lieut.-General Sir H. H. Wilson, the Corps Commander, in a letter to the Commander of the 2nd Division, wrote:—"The exploit failed, but not from want of thought, preparation and gallant leading. Will you tell Daly (Brigade Commander) how sorry I am about his loss in gallant young Officers."

The 2nd South Staffords remained in the Vimy Ridge sector until the opening stages of the great Somme battles, their time being divided between training in the rest billets, supplying working parties, and alternately relieving other Battalions in the front line trenches. On June 18th, the 6th Infantry Brigade took over from the 5th Infantry Brigade the Berthonval North sub-section, the South Staffords relieving the 17th Royal Fusiliers (5th Brigade) in the trenches just in front of what was called the Labyrinth at Neuville St. Vaast. During this tour the weather was fine and the Germans fairly quiet, so that much good work was done in consolidating the position. All this time preparations were being completed for the great offensive in July, and the work had to be carried on in addition to the constant strain of trench warfare. Raids and exploding of mines were of daily occurrence, the Germans retaliating with heavy artillery barrages. Owing to these causes, the nights spent by the 2nd Battalion in this area were frequently disturbed. Unfortunately, the weather continued very wet, and the trenches fell in almost as soon as they were repaired. To quote Sir Douglas Haig:—"This vast preparatory work

Digitized by Google

for the Somme battles had to be done under very trying conditions, and was liable to constant interruption from the enemy's fire."(1)

The German line was of amazing complexity, consisting of "a strong first line with firing, support, and reserve trenches, and a labyrinth of deep dug-outs." Behind this lay further fortified positions, which could be readily linked up with the front and second line positions. Added to this, the Germans were well served by the network of railways which lay behind their positions and the many new light lines they had constructed, enabling them to move reserves of troops to any point attacked, in much quicker time than the Allies with their restricted means of communication. It was a fortress line which the Germans believed to be impregnable.

The colossal preparations for this Somme attack far exceeded anything the British Army had accomplished in any previous campaign. Practically the "old Army" had been "wiped out"; those famous old Regiments who fought at Mons and the first Battle of Ypres had been almost completely renewed by new drafts of men and Officers drawn from the same source as the Territorials and new Service Battalions. Munitions had multiplied as well as men, and it was "no patchwork force" which, in June, 1916, opposed itself to the Germans, but the cream of the manhood of the British Empire: different, perhaps, from the old famous line Regiments, but reared and cradled in their traditions.

The New Army

The British aim in the opening stages of the Somme battles was the capture of the first German position, and the portion selected for the attack ran from Gommecourt in the North, thence South in front of Serre and Beaumont Hamel, crossing the Ancre a little to the North-west of Theipval. The opening phases of the battle have been described in the record of the 1st Battalion. It was not until July 20th that the 2nd South Staffords came into action at Montaubon. From the 1st July, the opening day of the Somme battle, the 2nd Battalion had been occupying the trenches in Berthonval North, but on July 20th instructions were received for the 2nd Division to move to the Fourth Army area, and two days later they moved to Bois de Tailles, about 1½ miles from the Somme. Here they were billeted in wooden huts and tents.

On the 25th July, the South Staffords marched up to the Reserve Brigade area in the old German support line between Carnoy and Montaubon. The 6th Infantry Brigade was now attached to the 3rd Division. Two days later, on July 27th, the 2nd Battalion left the Reserve area, and moved up with

(1) Sir Douglas Haig's Second Despatch, 29th December, 1916.

Digitized by Google

the 17th Middlesex Regiment to support the 99th Infantry Brigade, who had captured a portion of Delville Wood, and assisted in beating back a German counter-attack. On arriving at Delville Wood, the 2nd South Staffords relieved the 23rd Fusiliers, who were holding the Western half of the Wood, in touch with the 5th Division on the left. This relief was accomplished under heavy shell fire from the enemy, and was a matter of some difficulty. "Hour after hour, day and night, with increasing intensity as the time went on, the enemy rained heavy shell into the area. Now he would send them crashing in on a line South of the road, eight heavy shells at a time, minute after minute, followed by a burst of shrapnel. Now he would place a curtain straight across this valley or that till the sky and landscape were blotted out, except for fleeting glimpses seen as through a lift of fog."(1)

Attack on Delville Wood.

In the early hours of July 28th, the 99th Infantry Brigade was withdrawn from Delville Wood, and the 2nd South Staffords were disposed as follows:—"A" Company was in the front line near the Northern edge of the Wood, "B" Company in support, with "C" Company forming a defensive flank facing West, while "D" Company were in Battalion reserve. Delville Wood was now held by the 2nd South Staffords and the 17th Middlesex alone, for the 6th Infantry Brigade had now relieved the 99th Infantry Brigade, the latter having gone back into reserve trenches along the Montauban—Carnoy road. The position held by the 2nd South Staffords was precisely as at Ypres in 1914, for they were holding the most Easterly point in the battlefield, and for the two days they held this position they were subjected to incessant artillery fire by the Germans, and casualties were heavy.

About 9 p.m. on the night of July 28th, the bombardment started, and soon portions of the trenches held by "B" Company were practically obliterated, all the Officers were killed, and most of the men buried, but the survivors carried on and stuck to their position. Immediately after this bombardment, the Germans made a heavy counter-attack on the 2nd South Staffords' trenches on the North-west of Delville Wood. This attack was accompanied by very heavy shelling of the South Staffords' support line, and the Southern edge of the Wood. German bombing parties approached the first line and endeavoured to gain a footing, but were easily driven back, and the whole of the original positions were held.

"C" Company's line also came in for heavy punishment. Most of this fire came from a heavy German battery in the direction of Ginchy, which completely enfiladed the South

(1) Buchan, History of the War. Vol. XVI., p. 81.

Digitized by Google

Staffords' support line; but the old 80th held on under great difficulties, for all supplies had to be taken up to the Companies under a very heavy barrage.

This position in Delville Wood formed a very advanced salient in the British front, and was exposed to the German shell fire from three directions, yet the gallant men who held it did not give way or yield an inch of ground. It may safely be said the holding of such a position is the most supreme test to which any troops can be put, yet the old 80th held it for two days; for it had to be held, as the position was of vital importance for a further advance. The German troops who were driven out of Delville Wood were some of the crack Brandenburgers and Bavarian Divisions. The splendid tenacity of the 2nd South Staffords in holding on to their line was recognised by congratulations from Sir Douglas Haig, and both Corps and Divisional Commanders, and by Brig.-General A. C. Daly, commanding 6th Brigade.(1)

Holding Delville Wood.

On August 1st, the 2nd South Staffords, who were in Montauban Alley, were relieved by the 23rd Royal Fusiliers. Their Headquarters had been heavily shelled during the day, and on relief three Companies marched back to the old British line in front of Carnoy. The remaining Company of the South Staffords, who were in Longueval Alley, were not relieved until midnight, and then had to make their way back through Montauban, where they had to pass through a German barrage of gas-shells and shrapnel. None of the men were gassed, but Captain R. P. Phipps and five other ranks were wounded by shrapnel.

The 2nd Battalion remained at Carnoy until August 5th, and while there were reinforced by a draft of 200 other ranks. Some of these men had undergone active service during the War in the Dardanelles and in Egypt, and were seasoned soldiers.

While the Battalion was in this Reserve area, owing to the activity of German aircraft, it became necessary to camouflage the trenches, as the Germans were paying special attention to this area, bombing Brigade Headquarters and the ammunition dumps.

While here, the 8th South Staffords (Service Battalion) came into Reserve billets on the left of the 2nd Battalion, and

(1) During this tour of fighting, the 2nd South Staffords lost heavily, the following Officers being killed and wounded :—

KILLED.—Captains W. E. Wansbrough, W. Lake and C. Dutton; Lieut. J. L. Malpass; 2nd Lieuts. S. B. Thornton and E. L. Holdcroft; also 42 other ranks.

WOUNDED.—196 other ranks, while 21 other ranks were suffering from shell shock, and 46 were returned as missing.

Digitized by Google

old friendships were renewed. This new Service Battalion had been operating in this district for some time, and had done remarkably well, but were in a different Division.

On August 4th, Lieut.-Colonel R. W. Morgan, D.S.O., was sent for to take command of the 21st Infantry Brigade, and Captain G. Dawes assumed command of the 2nd South Staffords. Next day, there was a conference at Brigade Headquarters, and the Divisional General, Major-General W. G. Walker, V.C., C.B., complimented the Battalions on their work during the recent operations. A fresh attack on Guillemont was planned for the night of August 6th, but while the discussion was proceeding a message was received deferring the attack until August 7th, and in the evening of August 5th the 2nd South Staffords moved up to the Bernafay Wood area. "C" Company went into New Trench, and "D" Company into Trones Trench, where they worked hard and well in making them fit for assembly trenches for the attack on the night of August 7th. "A" and "B" Companies were in Dummy Trench, and had a few casualties.

After dark on August 6th, the 1st King's Liverpool Regiment took over New and Trones Trenches, and the 2nd South Staffords were situated as follows:—"A" and "D" Companies in Dummy Trench, "B" Company in Longueval Alley, and "C" Company in trenches East of Bernafay Wood.

Attack on Guillemont.

The ground captured from the Germans now extended from Delville Wood, through Waterlot Farm to just North of Guillemont, which latter place was still held in strength by the enemy.

All day long on August 7th "B" and "C" Companies found carrying parties to take material to the 17th Middlesex Regiment at Waterlot Farm, and to the 1st King's Liverpool Regiment in their assembly trenches, finding them rations and supplies of munitions.

In the attack on Guillemont, the 2nd South Staffords had orders to closely support the attack the following morning, and as Battalion Headquarters were instructed to remain at Bernafay Wood, this close support was maintained by placing "A" Company at the disposal of the Officer Commanding 17th Middlesex Regiment, at the same time arranging for "D" Company to take the place of "A" Company as they were called upon.

The attack was launched at 4.20 a.m. on August 8th, in conjunction with the French forces closing in on Guillemont, but some time elapsed before the situation became anything like clear. The Officer Commanding "A" Company, South Staffords, was not called upon until 5.30 a.m., and by the

Digitized by Google

time he had sent a platoon to New Trench, it was seen that the Headquarters and three Companies of the 1st King's Liverpool Regiment, who had gone "over the top," had lost touch with their fourth Company, which had been detailed to clear up the German front. This was apparently as strongly held by the Germans with rifles and machine guns as when the original attack began. Three platoons of "A" Company (South Staffords) were called for in quick succession, and at 5.45 a.m. the Officer Commanding "A" Company went up to New Trench himself. He found that the Officer Commanding 1st King's Liverpool Regiment had made up his mind to consolidate New Trench with the remainder of the fourth Company (1st King's), which had been seriously depleted in the attack. Some stragglers who had returned from the first three Companies (1st King's) were collected, and with one platoon of "A" Company (South Staffords) were formed into a garrison. The other two platoons of "A" Company (South Staffords) not being required, they remained in Trones Trench.

Meanwhile, Major W. H. Carter, M.C. (2nd South Staffords)—who had been given command of the 17th Middlesex Regiment, after Colonel Fenwick had been wounded in the attack on Delville Wood—called up half "B" Company (South Staffords) into the trenches behind Waterlot Farm. About 4 p.m. further calls were made by the 17th Middlesex Regiment, and "C" and "D" Companies (South Staffords), under Captain G. Dawes, were detailed to report to Major W. H. Carter, whose attack had been held up by a nest of German machine guns in what was called "Machine Gun House." On arrival, the position was consolidated, but further attack was postponed until next day. **Attack on Guillemont.**

During the evening of August 8th, a Company of the 13th Essex Regiment, which had come into support, relieved New Trench; and later, the 2nd Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry took over Trones and Dummy Trenches. About 11.15 p.m., the other Companies of the 13th Essex Regiment arrived, asking for guides to their position. Unfortunately, an Officer of the 1st King's Liverpool Regiment, who was responsible for these guides, had been buried by shell fire explosions, and, suffering from shell shock, had, on arrival at Brigade Headquarters, been sent away sick, so nothing was known of the 13th Essex Regiment's position. However, with the assistance of Major Crosse, D.S.O., commanding 2nd Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry, the necessary reliefs were effected and the position left as follows:—Three Companies of 13th Essex Regiment in New Trench, and one Company in Trones Trench. Two Companies of 2nd Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry in Dummy Trench, with the other two Companies

Digitized by Google

in Bernafay Wood; the 17th Middlesex Regiment, under Major W. H. Carter, M.C., and half "B" Company (South Staffords) occupied the front positions round Waterlot Farm, while "A" Company and remaining half of "B" Company (South Staffords) were in Longueval Alley, just North of Waterlot Farm.

"B" Company had been working hard all day carrying rations for their own Battalion as well as for the 17th Middlesex Regiment.

Attack on "Machine Gun House."

On the morning of August 9th, at 2.30 a.m., after artillery preparation, the attack was made on "Machine Gun House" and the German trench running to what was known as Z—Z Trench. A party of the 2nd South Staffords, led by Captain W. G. Fluke, with great dash succeeded in gaining a footing in the trench and doing great damage to the enemy. Unfortunately, they were not strong enough to hold it, and were driven out by large German reinforcements. Captain W. G. Fluke made a second gallant attempt to retake the trench, but by this time the Germans had so strongly reinforced it that success was impossible. Requests were sent back for fresh artillery support from our guns, and while awaiting this result Major W. H. Carter kept the South Stafford Companies busily employed with their Lewis guns and rifle fire in giving support to the 13th Essex Regiment.

The renewed artillery fire was most successful, and many enemy casualties were effected by our Infantry at the same time. Preparations were then made for a third Infantry attack on the position, but both our own artillery and the German heavy guns opened fire on the trench, and before another opportunity offered itself for this attack orders were received not to resume the offensive, and the 2nd South Staffords, on being relieved by the 12th Royal Fusiliers, went into camp in Happy Valley. In this fighting, Lieut. S. T. Spicer and C.S.M. W. H. Lichfield were both severely wounded, and later succumbed to their injuries.

The position attacked was naturally very strong and had been elaborately fortified by the enemy, while close behind Waterlot Farm was the German main second line system of defence. "The enemy had realised the importance of holding us back in this area, and had dug and wired many new trenches, both in front and behind his original lines. He had also brought up fresh troops, and there was no possibility of taking him by surprise."(1)

It is impossible to describe the awful carnage of the Somme battles. The wholesale slaughter of men, the continuous roar

(1) Sir Douglas Haig's Second Despatch.

Digitized by Google

of the guns, deafening in their intensity, made their mark on the men who took part in it. Such a stupendous expenditure of ammunition had never been paralleled in any previous war, and if our losses were heavy, the Germans' were infinitely greater.

From Happy Valley the 2nd South Staffords went into billets at Meaulte, well in the back area from the Somme. Here they were resting and refitting until August 19th, when they took over the line in the Serre sub-sector trenches, just North of Beaumont Hamel (about eight miles North-west of Albert), relieving the 2nd Coldstream Guards. The 2nd Division had now left the Fourth Army area, and as the Fifth Corps was transferred from Ypres to the Somme West and North of the river Ancre, on the 19th August, the 2nd Division came under the orders of this Corps, the 2nd South Staffords being in the centre section of the line.

Resting and Refitting.

They remained in this sector of the front until the end of September, 1916. During the month, which was fairly quiet on this part of the front, in contrast with the activity on the Somme, part of the time was spent in the trenches, and, when on relief, working parties were furnished for repairing and wiring the front line trenches.

For some time during these tours of duty in this sector, the 2nd South Staffords had lent several Officers to the 1st King's Liverpool Regiment, and Colonel Morris, of the 1st King's, wrote to the Commanding Officer of the 2nd South Staffords, thanking them for this assistance, and expressed a desire that the friendship between the two Battalions should continue under peace conditions. In a Brigade, the two Battalions which exchanged relief were naturally more closely associated than the other Battalions of the same Brigade who did not relieve them; and it is a remarkable fact that the old 80th has more than once received reciprocal sentiments from other Battalions with which it has been acting, testifying to the true spirit of comradeship animating them both.

Trench Warfare.

On September 24th, Brig.-General A. C. Daly visited the 2nd South Staffords and complimented them on their good work at Delville Wood. Afterwards, the Bishop of Khartum, D.C.G. of the Forces, conducted Divine Service, and in his address to the Battalion he said he remembered what the 2nd South Staffords had done at Richbourg, Festubert, and at Loos; and he had no doubt they had maintained their high reputation on the Somme.

During this rest period, intensive training was carried out whenever possible, and on October 1st the 2nd South Staffords took over the support area, Hebuterne section. Three Com-

Digitized by Google

panies, "A," "B," and "D," were in billets at Rossignal Farm, and "C" Company garrisoned Grosvenor Fort.

After a week in this area, they made a quick move to Puchevillers on October 7th, and from this date until October 18th they were training hard for the fresh offensive which marked the fourth stage of the Somme battles. In this training area the whole German position selected for attack had been reproduced on a smaller scale from air photographs and personal reconnaisance, and the men were trained in practice attack on these models until each man knew his own position in the scheme of attack and what he had to do.

For the remainder of October the 2nd Battalion were located at Bertrancourt, and during this period they furnished large fatigue parties day and night. The weather was very trying, with strong gales, and raining in torrents. It was intensely cold, and the trenches were half-full of water, while the ground was churned up into a sticky slime that made going extremely difficult; but the work had to be done, and those who were not in the fatigue parties were kept busy in training and drill.

Trench Warfare.

On October 28th, the 2nd Battalion relieved the 13th Essex Regiment in the Northern sub-section of the Redan (South of Serre). Owing to the recent heavy rain, the trenches were in an awful state; and with a continuance of bad weather the men were continually working on repairs, for the Germans periodically shelled the front line and the reserve trenches. On the last day of October, a welcome relief by the 22nd Royal Fusiliers permitted the 2nd South Staffords to return to rest billets at Bertrancourt; but there was no rest for them: the camp was in a shocking condition, one vast accumulation of mud, so that the sapping platoon was continuously at work improving the conditions of the huts and roads.

On November 7th, the 2nd South Staffords moved to Mailly Maillet, in preparation for the renewal of the offensive on November 13th. The successes of the past four months had driven a big salient into the heart of the German defences South of Thiepval, but the strong enemy front before Beaumont Hamel and Serre had yet to be taken. This position was immensely strong, for it constituted the old first German line, and the enemy had spent two years in stocking it with endless redoubts and strong points filled with machine guns, while the wire entanglements were on a scale which had probably no parallel. The ground, too, helped the enemy, for the Germans held the high ground from Beaumont Hamel to Gommecourt. South of this was the valley of the Ancre, the country on the right bank of the stream having clearly marked spurs descending to the valley of the river, the chief

Digitized by Google

of these being a long ridge with Serre as its Western extremity.

Active patrol work was carried out along the German wire, and on November 11th 2nd Lieut. F. J. Brooks, who was in charge of a patrol and the Battalion torpedo party, successfully exploded a torpedo under the German front line wire at a selected point in front of the Battalion assembly trenches.

These assembly trenches were just South of Serre, and the 2nd South Staffords moved into them during the night of November 12th. There was very little German shelling and no casualties occurred during the process of forming up.

The British left wing in this attack comprised three Divisions: the 2nd Division, the 3rd and 51st Divisions, while further extended to the right was the Naval Division, which, after fighting at Antwerp and Gallipoli, was now for the first time taking part in action on the Western front.

The 2nd South Staffords formed the left front Battalion and the 13th Essex Regiment the right front Battalion, of the 6th Infantry Brigade. The South Staffords joining up on their left with the 3rd Division. Each Battalion was to go forward in four waves, in column of half Companies in single file, three paces between each man, the distance between each wave being 100 yards. Immediately behind the first wave, ready to follow as closely as possible, came the "mopping up" parties with two Lewis guns. The 6th Brigade Machine Gun Company provided four guns each for the 2nd South Staffords and the 13th Essex Regiment, the remaining guns being in support or reserve. Each man in the attacking parties carried 150 rounds of ammunition, two Mills bombs and two sandbags, with one iron ration and one day's ration.

The Battle of the Ancre.

After a preliminary bombardment, lasting from November 11th to the 13th, the attack was commenced in the darkness and heavy mist of a November morning, when at 5.45 a.m. the men went "over the top." The going was extremely heavy, but the 2nd South Staffords, guided by their Officers marching on compass bearings, went straight towards their objective, which, owing to the thick fog was invisible. The attack had been most carefully planned, but in that dense shroud it was hard for the best trained soldiers to keep direction. The 2nd South Staffords successfully crossed the German front line, and moving close on the fringe of our own barrage, assaulted the second German line wire, which was practically uncut. Here, they were held up, and to make matters worse for them, unfortunately, units from the 3rd Division on their left, having lost direction in the darkness, came across the South Staffords' front, breaking up their

Digitized by Google

formation. All was confusion for a time, it was a regular mix up, and reorganisation was rendered difficult owing to the heavy mist, meanwhile our barrage had gone on ahead of the troops—widening the gap between it and the South Staffords. The ground over which they had to advance was ploughed up into a sticky mud into which the men sank in places up to their waists. Gallant efforts were made by Officers and men to find a gap in the German wire through which they could advance, but it was found to be practically impassable. Casualties among both Officers and men were very heavy, for the Germans, after the barrage had passed over their position, came up out of their dug-outs and opened a withering machine gun fire on the troops.

The Battle of the Ancre.

Among others, two Company Commanders were missing, one of whom, Captain R. P. Phipps, was known to be wounded, two Subalterns missing and believed killed, several Subalterns were wounded, and also all the four C.S.Ms., but C.S.M. Cox remained at duty until the Battalion was relieved. The bombs issued to each man had been used, mud made the rifles useless, and there was nothing left but for the South Staffords to fall back to the old defensive lines in Monk and Legend trenches.(1)

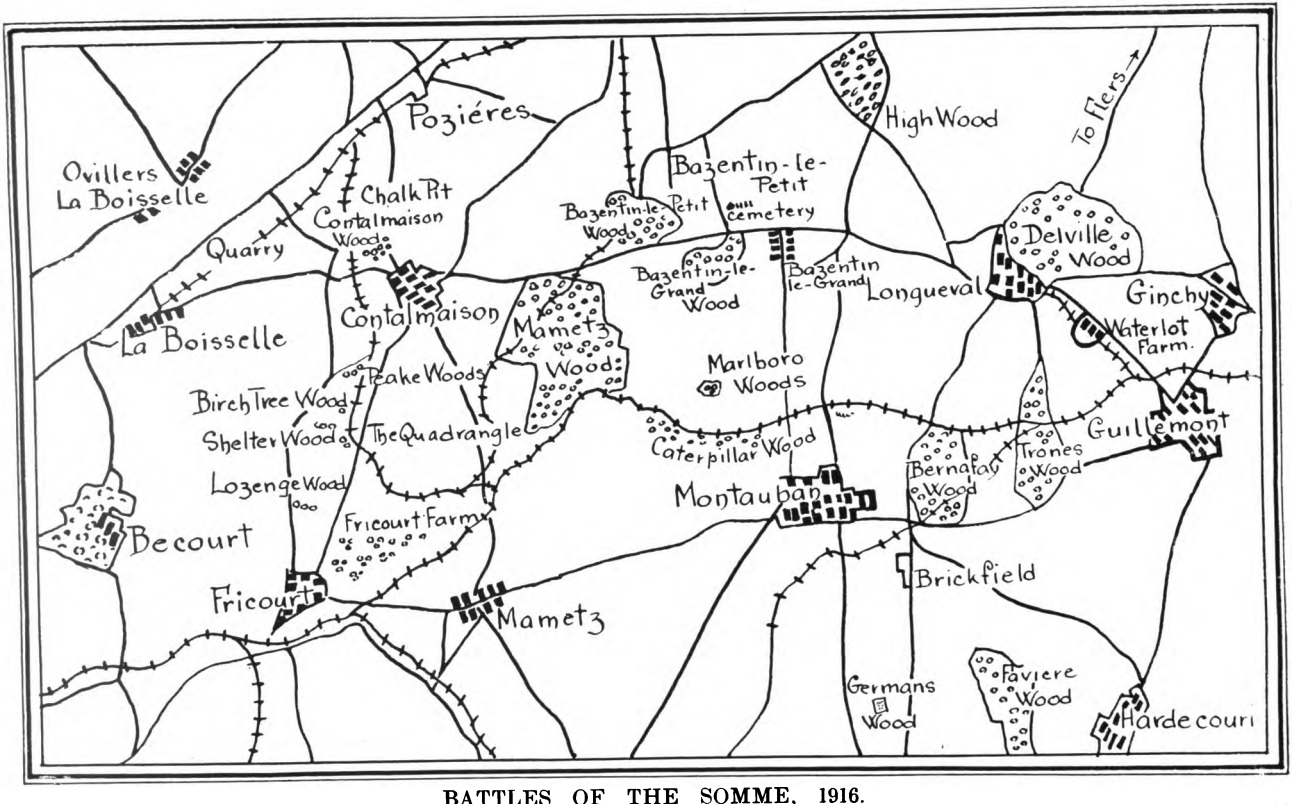
During this fighting the Chaplain joined Battalion Headquarters, and did excellent work for the wounded, acting as dresser and giving much needed help.

For two days the 2nd South Staffords held these trenches against heavy German counter-attacks, and while little progress was possible after the unfortunate happenings of November 13th, despite all attacks, they grimly held their own line. They were relieved on November 15th by the 4th Royal Fusiliers, and the Battalion, sadly depleted in strength, went back to the area known as Ellis Square, but owing to the Germans putting down a heavy barrage on Monk Trench, one detachment was not relieved until twelve hours after the bulk of the Battalion had gone.

On relief they went into rest billets at Louvencourt, being taken there by motor lorries from Mailly Maillett. While in these rest billets at Louvencourt, the Divisional General, Major-General W. G. Walker, V.C., C.B., visited the South Staffords' Headquarters, and expressed his satisfaction with the part they had played in the recent fighting. "He pointed out, that by being on the edge of that part of the line which

(1) The Officers killed in this action were :—2nd Lieut. F. J. Brooks (4th Battalion), Acting Captain R. P. Phipps (3rd Battalion), Captain G. D. Perrin (3rd Battalion), 2nd Lieut. E. S. Wilmot (4th Battalion), 2nd Lieut. N. L. Winstanley (4th Battalion), 2nd Lieut. C. W. Goodall.

Digitized by Google



BATTLES OF THE SOMME, 1916.

MAP 6.

To face p. 336.

Digitized by Google
UNIV. OF WICH.

Digitized by Google

failed to advance, it had to bear the brunt of the enemy resistance. He expressed great regret at the heavy casualties suffered, but said, that these were inevitable in an action of this nature."(1)

There is little doubt that but for the unfortunate mix-up of the Battalions crossing the South Staffords' front in the fog they would have gained all their objectives, for before this happened they had captured the first German line, and one 2nd Lieutenant of the South Staffords had managed to creep through the wire and enter the second German trench, but being wounded, and lacking support, he and his men were forced to retire.

This was the last phase of the concluding stages of the great Somme battles, where the fighting had extended over five months, during this period the British had achieved the three main objects for which it was begun in July. To quote Sir Douglas Haig's second dispatch, "Verdun had been relieved, the main German Forces had been held on the Western front, and the enemy's strength had been very considerably worn down."

In this great achievement all the South Staffordshire Regiments had a glorious share, the old Line, and the new Service Battalions, appearing and reappearing in the front line through the various stages of this great fight, winning fresh honours and adding lustre to their famous old traditions.

Resting and Training.

From November 17th until the end of the year 1916, the 2nd South Staffords were resting and training in various areas in rear of the line. On November 26th Captain G. W. Fluke, D.S.O., returned from sick leave in charge of a draft of 148 other ranks. Lieut-Colonel G. Dawes, M.C., was in command of the Battalion during the later stages of the fighting, and while on leave for a few days the command of the 2nd Battalion was successively held by Captain G. W. Fluke, D.S.O., Captain P. H. Keary and Major A. J. Knocker (attached 1st King's Liverpool Regiment), the training being continued in accordance with the programme.

A few feeble counter-attacks were attempted by the Germans on parts of the front line, but were easily repulsed, and the month of December was fairly quiet. Christmas Day passed quietly, but the year ended in a spell of bad weather.

(1) War Diary.

Digitized by Google

THE RECORD OF THE 2ND BATTALION, 1917.

Trench Warfare—Fighting on the Upper Ancre—The German Retreat —Advance to Bapaume—Battle of Arras—Attack on Oppy-Arleux—In Reserve—Third Battle of Ypres—Givenchy Sector—Battle of Cambrai— The Epic of Bourlon Wood.

DURING the early days of January, 1917, the bad spell of weather continued. There was a heavy snow fall, and the inclement weather made the lot of the working parties extremely difficult. The Battalion remained at Capennes undergoing strict training until January 10th, when they moved to fresh billets at Meillard. Training was continued here, with the routine varied by supplying working parties for trench repairs, until the 24th, when the Battalion took over the left sub-sector, Courcelette, from the 17th Middlesex Regiment. "B" and "D" Companies were in the front line.

Trench Warfare.

The Battle of the Somme had given the Germans such a shaking up that it was clear to them that a mere defensive battle was not enough. After being driven back by the Allies from ridge to ridge, and hammered day and night by the Allied guns, their *morale* was so shaken that nothing short of a strongly fortified position was likely to be held. Von Hindenburg, who had succeeded to the supreme command of the German Forces, saw at once that unless he created such a position the end of the War had come for Germany. Therefore, while preparing for a vigorous offensive during the Spring, he set about preparing a line of fortifications upon which he could retire and shorten his line. This new line was known as the "Seigfried Line," and in conjunction with what was called the "Hindenburg Line" was deemed by the Germans to be impregnable.

The advance made by the Allies from July 1st until December 31st, 1916, had driven a deep salient into the German position, and had made very substantial gain of ground.

The section the 2nd Battalion had now taken over was just in front of Bapaume—the next objective in the British advance. They had one casualty during the relief, otherwise the night was quiet. Lieut. R. Baxter took up the duties of Intelligence Officer and good information was obtained. The Battalion was busy wiring their front, and during the night

Digitized by Google

they got in touch with the 18th Division on their left. Next day, they were heavily shelled by the Germans and subjected to rifle grenade fire both day and night. The enemy had gapped their wire as though in preparation for an attack, and about dawn on the 26th January the Germans attempted a raid on No. 11 Post. As soon as the German Infantry reached their own wire, the Lewis gun in the Post opened fire, killing four and wounding others. The enemy threw a few bombs towards the Post held by the South Staffords, and then retired without having done anything. Another German Post opposite the Staffords' left Company was still giving trouble. This was dealt with by the Howitzer Battery and silenced.

During the morning of the 27th, the Divisional General visited Battalion Headquarters and expressed his satisfaction at the way 2nd Lieut. C. R. Woolley and his men had dealt with the situation at No. 11 Post.

On relief by the 23rd Royal Fusiliers, the Battalion went into rest billets at Bouzincourt. The 6th Infantry Brigade were now in Reserve, and while here Major A. E. C. Wilson left the Battalion to take over the duties of D.R.D.O. The Adjutant, Lieut. West, took over his duty, and Lieut. and Quartermaster Hazelgrove, M.C., took over the duty of A/Adjutant, 2nd Lieut. G. Dutton acting as Quartermaster. From the 1st February until the 12th the weather was frosty, and there was a bright moon for several nights. Both our own and the German airmen took advantage of the light nights, and while our men harassed the German lines the enemy retaliated by bombarding the area where the Battalion was training. Machine gun fire from the air was very trying during this period. Next day the thaw set in, but parties were out practising night attack and placing direction tapes as a guide for the relieving Battalion.

Attack on Baillescourt Farm.

February 17th was fixed for an attack on Baillescourt Farm, which, if won, would give us the command of the Western approaches to Miraumont. The Battalion left their billets in the evening of the 16th for the front line. The cloudy weather resulted in a pitch dark night, and the thaw made going very difficult. The Germans evidently expected an attack, and their artillery shelled the front and forming-up places continuously, so that the carrying parties were late in arriving. About 5.45 a.m. our barrage opened, and the assaulting lines began to crawl forward to get to their position in I. Trench. For some time the position was rather obscure. The Battalion had gained its objective, but was subjected to the German machine gun fire and casualties were heavy. Afterwards, it was discovered that the attack had been given away and the German line strongly reinforced with men and machine guns.

Digitized by Google

Of the ten Officers who went "over the top" to the attack one only returned uninjured, three returned wounded, two remaining at duty. 2nd Lieut. Wright was killed. Lieut. Chapman and 2nd Lieut. Cave were afterwards found killed, and Captains Tate, Douglas-Willan and 2nd Lieut. Oxlade were reported missing.

The position won was consolidated, and what remained of the Battalion was relieved on the night of the 18th February by the 1st King's Liverpool Regiment. They then went into Brigade Reserve for the remainder of the month.

The Germans now had begun their retirement to their celebrated fortified line, and by the 28th February the British had pushed forward and occupied a number of villages, advancing as far as Serre. The British advance sustained few casualties, but here and there some German machine gun nests had to be cleared; and the enemy persistently shelled the old trenches he had evacuated.

The Great German Retreat.

The weather favoured the German retirement, for "when the thaw commenced the sides of the trenches fell in, the roads, disintegrated by the frost, broke up, and the area through which our troops fought their way forward returned to a condition of slough and quagmire even worse than that of the previous Autumn. On the other hand, the condition of the roads and the surface of the ground behind the enemy steadily improved the farther he withdrew from the scene of the fighting. He was also materially assisted by a succession of misty days, which greatly interfered with the work of our aeroplanes. Over such ground and in such conditions rapid pursuit was impossible. It is greatly to the credit of all ranks concerned that, in spite of all difficulties, constant touch was maintained with the enemy, and that timely information was obtained of his movements."(1)

Training and providing working parties on roads was continued until the 11th March, but while at work in the support area on March 8th, "B" Company was heavily shelled by the Germans and sustained 21 casualties. On the 13th, the Battalion moved to Courcelette, it having been discovered that the Germans had fallen back from Loupart Wood to the Bihucourt line, north-west of Bapaume. Next day, they relieved the 13th Essex Regiment in the Irles—Grevillers road and Loupart Wood positions, from which point the next advance was to be made.

Constant patrols kept the German line at Bihucourt under close observation. This line was still strongly held by the

(1) Sir Douglas Haig's Third Despatch.

Digitized by Google

enemy, and on the 15th two strong patrols, under Lieut. F. G. Fluke, D.S.O., and 2nd Lieut. Aitken, made an attempt to occupy a portion of the line. Unfortunately, it was found to be strongly held by the Germans, and the patrol under Lieut. Fluke had some casualties; but although unable to gain the German line, a position was consolidated about half-way between our lines and the enemy, and a telephone post established. This proved invaluable as a report centre for patrols. The weather was very misty, and under cover of it the Germans used one of their ruses to deceive our men by working hard on their line and wire before retiring. One such party of Germans was dispersed with several casualties by a small patrol, under Captain Woolley, M.C., who brought a Lewis gun into action against them.

On the 17th, the Germans evacuated the Bihucourt line early in the morning, and the British advance continued. Next day, the 1st King's Liverpool Regiment advanced through the 2nd South Staffords, who quickly followed up in close support, through Loupart Wood, then to the Irles—Grevillers road, and finally reaching Sapignies at night.

Next day, March 19th, the advance continued, "A" Company of the South Staffords, under Captain Baxter, M.C., being attached to the 1st King's Liverpool, the village of Mory being captured. The 2nd Division was relieved the same night, and the Battalion went back to a camp in Duke Valley, the weather towards evening becoming very bad. **Capture of Mory.**

Bapaume and Peronne had both been captured, and the retiring Germans had now reached the "Siegfried Line," leaving behind them "a track of flaming villages." But this was not the worst destruction they accomplished in their retreat. The Germans were quite within their rights in destroying everything likely to be of value to the Allies; but where his brutalities shocked the decencies of all civilised people was in the wanton and savage destruction of "orchards of immature fruit trees which could not have afforded shelter to a rat."

On March 23rd, the Second Division was transferred from the 2nd to the 13th Corps (First Army) and moved to its allotted area at Pernes; the 6th Infantry Brigade now being constituted as follows, Brig.-General R. M. Walsh, D.S.O., commanding the Brigade:—1st King's, 2nd South Staffords, 17th Middlesex, 13th Essex, 6th Brigade Machine Gun Company, and 6th Trench Mortar Battery.

The Battalion remained in billets at Hestrus from March 30th to April 7th, where intensive training was carried out daily, excepting on Good Friday, April 6th, which was

Digitized by Google

observed as a Sunday and rest day. On April the 11th, the Battalion marched to the Roclincourt trenches, just north of Arras, where they had to make shift in dug-outs and trenches in the vicinity of Rippert; while the 6th Infantry Brigade was in Reserve, as there was great difficulty in finding accommodation for them.

The Battle of Arras was just beginning, and the Battalion—with the other Battalions of the 6th Infantry Brigade—from April 12th to 19th, was employed daily in making the roads strong enough to enable the Machine Gun Division to bring up the guns, who expressed their satisfaction with the work done. On April 15th, Major P. E. B. F. Smith (4th South Staffs. Regiment) arrived, on being posted to the Battalion.

As soon as it was dark on the night of the 18th, the 2nd Battalion moved up into the line on the right sub-sector of the Divisional front of the Brigade, and relieved the 52nd Light Infantry. Owing to the guides losing their way, there was some delay before the relief was completed, just before dawn of the 19th. During these four days in the line, the German shell fire was continuous, at times becoming intense, but casualties were remarkably small. Battalion Headquarters were established in Sunken Road at B15 central (Map Sheet 51B. N.W.). "C" Company held the right half of the Battalion front, and "D" Company the left half. The Battalion front was from the cross-roads just south of Roclincourt, and ran in a fairly straight line. This line was gradually connected up, deepened and improved. Touch was maintained with the 1st Hon. Artillery Corps on the right (63rd Division, 190th Brigade), and with the 13th Essex Regiment on the left. The line was not good for observation. "A" Company in support was placed in Bailleul, and "B" Company in support in Railway cutting. During the night of 20th/21st April an advanced trench was dug, roughly 400 yards from Oppy line, and "B" Company moved up and occupied the new trench with Lewis gun posts, and took over a post from the 1st Hon. Artillery Corps on the right. Some successful patrols were conducted on the enemy wire in front of Oppy line, the most successful being undertaken by 2nd Lieut. C. W. Bloomfield on the night 19th/20th April.

Trench Warfare.

After dark on the 22nd, the South Staffords were relieved in the front line by the 1st King's Liverpool Regiment, and went into support in the Farbies—Point-du-Jour line, on the east side of Vimy Ridge. Lieut.-Colonel G. Dawes, M.C., was wounded in the head by a fragment of shell while on his way down from the 1st King's Liverpool Headquarters about 3 a.m. on the 23rd, and Major J. J. Cameron assumed command of the Battalion. The position occupied by the Battalion was close to our gun batteries, and owing to

Digitized by Google

the German counter-battery work they sustained several casualties. During the morning of the 23rd April, the 63rd Division had attacked the German positions on their front, and in the afternoon "B," "C" and "A" Companies of the South Staffords were moved up to "Brown Line" to reinforce, but the situation became quiet and these three Companies returned to their original position at 6 p.m.

Next day, 24th April, "A" and "C" Companies were placed at the disposal of the 22nd Royal Fusiliers (attached 6th Brigade) for reinforcements in the front area, or for counter-attack if needed. "A" Company relieved "D" Company, 19th Middlesex, in Railway cutting, and "C" Company relieved "C" Company, 17th Middlesex, on Railway embankment, between two bridges from B21a. 8.5 to B21c. 8.8 Two sections of trench were dug by these two South Stafford Companies, while acting as reserve Companies to the 22nd Royal Fusiliers, who were holding the front and support line of the 6th Brigade front, in the right sub-sector of Divisional front. Next day, the Battalion found full strength carrying parties after dark, and "A" and "C" Companies, after completion of work, returned to their former position in front of Kleemann Stellung. The 2nd Battalion continued to provide a garrison at Farbies—Point-du-Jour, and on the evening of April 25th the 99th Brigade took over the Divisional front from the 6th and 5th Brigades.

The next two days were devoted to preparation for the attack on the 28th, which was given to the 5th and 6th Brigades to carry out on the Divisional front. The 6th Infantry Brigade was allotted the area of Oppy Village and Wood, while the 5th Brigade area lay between the villages of Arleux and Oppy.

Attack on Oppy Wood.

For this attack, the 2nd South Staffords was split up and allotted as follows:—Four Officers and 120 men of "B" Company to the 13th Essex Regiment; four Officers and 120 men of "D" Company to 17th Middlesex Regiment. "A" Company provided a carrying party of one Officer and 68 men for the 13th Essex Regiment, while "C" Company found a similar party for the 17th Middlesex Regiment. Thus, the Battalion, on going into this action, consisted of 10 Officers and 376 men, besides 4 Lewis gun teams (16 men) lent to the 13th Essex Regiment. These moves were made during the 27th.

The attack was timed to commence at 4.25 a.m. on the 28th, and our guns put down a heavy barrage on the German trenches. The troops moved forward to the attack, but by the time they reached the German wire, the enemy had opened a terrific machine gun fire on the advancing troops. Pushing

Digitized by Google

forward through this intense curtain of fire, the left flank of the attack progressed well. Arleux was captured by the Canadians and the 5th Brigade also made good progress. The 6th Brigade, attacking against Oppy Wood on the right Divisional front, had advanced with great gallantry to their second objective. Here the Germans were in overwhelming force, and the two leading Battalions, the 17th Middlesex and the 13th Essex Regiments, suddenly found themselves attacked in flank and rear. This was due to the failure of the left flank of the 63rd Division on the right of the 6th Infantry Brigade to reach its objective. The German wire was too strong to penetrate through. Having gone through Oppy Wood and entered Oppy village, these Battalions of the 6th Brigade were faced with a heavy counter-attack, and driven back to the old British line, after enduring a very inferno of shell fire and stubbornly contesting every yard of ground. Many deeds of heroism were performed by the 2nd South Staffords this day, and their casualties were heavy.(1)

2nd Lieut. Rankin displayed great courage and resource in handling "D" Company and other details coming under his command, and his gallant behaviour was brought to notice by the Officer Commanding 17th Middlesex Regiment.

Capture of Oppy Wood.

During this action, the remainder of the 2nd Battalion not attached to the attacking Battalion was in Brigade Reserve, "A" Company moving up to "Brown Line" to position formerly held by "D" Company. The 99th Brigade took over Divisional front, and the 2nd South Staffords, on relief, moved to Roclincourt reserve trenches, remaining in this area until May 1st, the time being devoted to cleaning up, ascertaining casualties and deficiencies.

The 2nd Division had suffered such severe losses during the Battle of Arleux that its strength in numbers was very weak, and for the first time during the War it was unable to put its three Brigades into action, for the available fighting strength was reduced to under 3,600. When the fresh offensive for the capture of Fresnoy was decided upon, the 2nd Division was allotted 1,000 yards of front to attack. At a Corps conference on April 30th, the General Officer Commanding Division explained his position, and stated "that the only way that the Division could do anything, now that they were so weak in numbers, and so many of the men unfit

---

(1) Their losses were :—
KILLED.—Captain W. A. Simmonds; 2nd Lieuts. H. Johnson, R. S. O'Connor and J. J. Smith, and 15 other ranks.
WOUNDED.—Lieut. T. H. Searls and 122 other ranks.
MISSING.—2nd Lieut. C. W. Bloomfield and 70 other ranks.

Digitized by Google

for further operations, was by forming a composite Brigade of the remnants of the three Brigades."

As the attack was of importance, being designed to help the French, who had planned a fresh offensive on the Aisne, it was decided the 2nd Division should carry out its share of the attack. The composite Brigade was composed of four Battalions, "A," "B," "C," and "D" Battalions; "D" Company of the 2nd South Staffords was appointed to "A" Battalion (5th Brigade) and "B" Company, 2nd South Staffords, to "B" Battalion (6th Brigade), while sections of "A" and "C" Companies formed carrying parties to both 5th and 6th Brigades.

On May 1st, the Battalion moved to Bray, and preparations were made for renewing the attack on the Oppy positions on May 3rd. "A" Company, made up with elements of "C" Company to 120 strong, under Captain R. Baxter, with Captain G. O. Kay and Lieut. L. C. Bull, was sent to 1st King's Liverpool Regiment (Lieut.-Colonel S. E. Morris, D.S.O.), and came under the orders of General Officer Commanding 99th Infantry Brigade, who commanded the 2nd Division Composite Brigade. For the attack on Oppy this Brigade was disposed as follows:—1st King's Liverpool Regiment, right Battalion of attack; 22nd Royal Fusiliers, left Battalion of attack; 1st King's Royal Rifle Corps, right support; 1st Berkshire Regiment, left support. The 1st King's Liverpool Regiment Composite Battalion was disposed as follows:—Right and left Companies in front, composed of 1st King's; right support Company, 2nd South Staffords; left support Company, 13th Essex Regiment.

Third Battle of the Scarpe.

The night of May 3rd was brilliant moonlight, and the Germans put down a violent bombardment on both front and support trenches, inflicting casualties and delaying the forming up. The attack was made at 2.45 a.m. on May 3rd, and the first objective gained. Owing to the attack on Oppy wood and village failing on the right, the Germans were enabled to make repeated counter-attacks, and finally penetrated the left flank of the attack. Shortly after midnight, May 3rd/4th, the Composite Brigade was relieved by the 1st West Kent Regiment and 14th Royal Warwick Regiment (5th Division), and on May 5th "A" Company, 2nd South Staffords, rejoined the Battalion at Roclincourt Camp.(1)

From May 2nd till the 18th the Battalion, after their long tour in the line, support and reserve trenches, had a welcome

(1) Their casualties in this action on May 3rd were:—
Lieut. L. C. Bull and 15 other ranks wounded.
Eight other ranks killed and 8 other ranks missing.

Digitized by Google

rest, the time being devoted to general cleaning up and refitting, although working parties were provided most days in the neighbourhood of Roclincourt Camp.

On May 5th, Major C. E. R. G. Alban, 1st King's Regiment, assumed command of the Battalion (*vice* Lieut.-Colonel G. Dawes, M.C., who had been wounded on 22nd April), taking over from Major J. J. Cameron, who had held temporary command. On May 14th, Lieut.-Colonel C. E. R. G. Alban was awarded the D.S.O.

From 18th May to 25th the Battalion was at Camblain Chatelaine undergoing general training, and on the latter date returned to Roclincourt Camp, where they remained training and furnishing working parties until the end of May. During the month they were reinforced by drafts totalling 181 other ranks.

By the beginning of June the Battle of Arras was drawing to its close, and the British Army had gained its immediate objectives, as well as having made further great attrition of the German forces opposed to it.

Trench Warfare.

On the 1st day of June, the 2nd South Staffords moved from Roclincourt Camp to relieve the 1st King's as support Battalion in right sub-sector of Divisional front (Arleux—Oppy Line), just north of Arras. For two days they were attached to the 99th Infantry Brigade. The position occupied was a little east of the Vimy Ridge, and east of the Railway embankment. There was desultory shelling during the two days they were in this sub-sector, but this did not prevent large working parties of the Battalion being provided, and good salvage work was done.

On the 3rd June, the Battalion was relieved by the 24th Royal Fusiliers, and then moved to the Farbus area, south of the wood on Vimy Ridge, rejoining the 6th Infantry Brigade in the Loci sub-sector of Divisional front as Reserve Battalion. From the 3rd to the 8th the Battalion provided working parties for the line nightly. During this period of five days, the Germans persistently shelled the battery positions in the Battalion area, and our own artillery was very active. Aircraft on both sides was active, but our airmen maintained their superiority over the Germans.

While in this Reserve area, the Battalion carried out musketry drill, established an O.P. on the east side of the wood—which provided much useful information—and detailed a working party for repairing the sunken road leading from Commandant's House to the railway embankment. The excellent salvage work carried out by this working party secured material worth several hundred pounds in value.

Digitized by Google

On the 9th, they were back in the line again, relieving the 1st King's, taking over an additional portion of the front line from Arleux-Bois to Steep Bank, north-east of Arras, the 1st King's on the right making a combined front post with the Canadians on the Battalion's left. From the 9th to 14th June the Battalion worked each night on making a new front line nearly 200 yards in front of front line proper. It was only possible to do this work at night, for the enemy commanded the position and could shell it by day. Care had to be taken that the ground showed no indication of new work; but good progress was made, the new line was deepened, and six posts were made with three Lewis gun positions, while the whole Battalion front was strongly wired. There was not much interference from the Germans, except on the night of the 10th June, when the enemy put down a hostile barrage with "whizz-bangs" and shrapnel, which interfered with the work and caused casualties of two killed and three wounded. This bombardment began on the Battalion's front line and new wire at 11.5 p.m. Three minutes later it lifted to the support line, and ceased at midnight. The Germans were trying to prevent our men working and also to prevent supports coming up; but, in spite of this shelling, by the end of this tour a good obstacle had been erected against any contemplated German attack. At the same time, the Battalion helped the Brigade to successfully construct in two days a tunnel under the road running parallel with the railway embankment. This was a strenuous piece of work to be accomplished in two days, and the efforts of the Brigade on this front were appreciated by the Higher Command. During inter-Company reliefs on the night of 12th June, the Germans put down a two minutes' heavy bombardment at intervals, in the hope of catching our men, but there were no casualties on our side. The German 77's were particularly active. After desultory shelling all day on the 14th June, the Battalion were relieved by the 1st Devon (95th Brigade, 5th Division), and moved to Ecoivres.

Heavy German Bombardment.

They remained here training and finding working parties until the 19th, when the Battalion was conveyed by motor 'buses and lorries to Bethune, and were again billeted in the tobacco factory. The 2nd Division had now been transferred from the 13th Corps to the 11th Corps area (Locon), north of Bethune, relieving the 6th Division. The 6th Brigade Headquarters were at Loisnes. On the 20th June, the Battalion relieved the 2/8th Lancashire Fusiliers (197th Infantry Brigade) as support Battalion in the Givenchy-les-La Bassée sector, and were again on familiar ground at "Windy Corner." Special training was carried out until the 26th, working and carrying parties being provided day and night in reliefs. Some idea of the arduous work done by the Battalion in these days is revealed by the fact that twenty

Digitized by Google

coils of concertina wire were made each day and delivered to the front Battalion for strengthening the line. At 7.15 p.m. on the 25th, the enemy put down a very heavy bombardment on the right sub-sector of Givenchy Keep with minenwerfers, doing considerable damage to support and communication trenches. This was followed by a raiding party of Bavarians (1st Bavarian Division) about 80 strong, who broke through the gap made in the craters. They were driven off by the 1st King's, who also took some prisoners, identifying the raiders at 40 Stormstruppers and 40 men of the 1st Bavarian Infantry Regiment.

Trench Warfare.

Next day, the Battalion relieved the 1st King's in this section of the front, taking over the front line. While on this tour the German artillery was rather inactive, except for an occasional burst of minenwerfer fire on the support lines. The Battalion was kept hard at work repairing the damage done on the 25th, wiring being done by all Companies of the Battalion, while patrols were out nightly, under 2nd Lieut. R. Rankin (Intelligence Officer), who was wounded while on patrol on June 30th.

During this month the Battalion received in reinforcements 6 Officers and 123 other ranks. Their casualty list for the month was:—4 other ranks killed, 1 Officer and 30 other ranks wounded. Lieut. J. West and 2nd Lieut. R. Rankin received the award of M.C. for good work done during this tour in the trenches. The maximum strength of the Battalion for this month was 22 Officers and 636 men; trench minimum strength, 15 Officers and 597 men. During the month of June, the weather was fine with occasional heavy thunderstorms, and the health of the Battalion was fairly well maintained, only 2 Officers and 62 other ranks reporting sick.

They remained in the front line until 2nd July, when they moved to Gorre in Reserve, remaining in this area until July 8th, usual training and working parties being provided. At 8.15 p.m., they relieved the 1st King's in the line, Givenchy right sub-sector, and held their position until the 13th. For the rest of the month of July their work was alternatively first line trenches in this sub-sector and periods in Reserve at Gorre.

Training and Working at Gorre.

During this period the third Battle of Ypres was being fought, and the troops in this sector of the line were busy keeping the Germans employed in defending their own lines. 2nd Lieut. W. Armstrong was wounded by a rifle grenade on

Digitized by Google

July 14th, and Captain C. R. Woolley, M.C., was wounded at Windy Corner on the way down from the line on the 24th.(1)

During this month's tour their casualty list was:—1 other ranks killed; 2 Officers and 14 other ranks wounded; evacuated sick, 28. The maximum ration strength of the Battalion being:—27 Officers, 618 other ranks; minimum ration strength, 24 Officers, 556 other ranks; while they were reinforced by 7 Officers and 20 other ranks.

On the 13th July, the General Officer Commanding 2nd Division, as a result of inspection of transport lines at Gorre, gave the Battalion first place in the Division. For the month of August they were in the same sector. The weather was very wet. Repairing of trenches entailed heavy work, giving them no rest.

At Givenchy Keep.

The Germans put down a heavy bombardment on Givenchy Keep, causing four casualties. The weather had turned out very bad, and for four days it rained incessantly, but trench warfare was normal. From the 3rd to 9th August the Battalion supplied mining parties to the 251st Tunnelling Company, R.E., daily, and on the 10th a mine was exploded at 7 a.m. Before the explosion the men were removed from the front line area, and re-occupied the position immediately after. The front line was mostly formed of craters and islands in a vast muddy pool. At 10.45 on the night of the 10th, the enemy succeeded in occupying both lips of the new crater formed by the explosion of the mine (named Warlingham Crater), after putting down a heavy artillery barrage.

Next day, 11th August, the Battalion on the right (17th Royal Fusiliers) attempted to drive out the Germans in Warlingham Crater, but the opposition was too strong. Next day, 12th August, after a further attempt, they succeeded in winning the near lip of the crater. The 5th Brigade, on the right of the South Staffords, put down a Stokes gas shell bombardment, and the Germans retaliated with a heavy bombardment on this front, which was maintained for three days; and on the 27th the 2nd Battalion was relieved by the 1st King's Liverpool Regiment and moved into support at Windy Corner, Village Line, where they remained until the end of the month of August, furnishing mining parties, drainage parties, and doing "housemaids'" work in the communication trenches.(2)

---

(1) During this month's (July) tour their casualty list was:—1 other ranks killed; 2 Officers and 14 other ranks wounded; evacuated sick, 28. The maximum strength of the Battalion being:—27 Officers, 618 other ranks; minimum ration strength, 24 Officers, 556 other ranks; while they were reinforced by 7 Officers and 20 other ranks.

(2) During the month of August their total casualties were:—4 killed, 20 wounded and 1 missing (on patrol), while they were reinforced by 6 Officers and 54 other ranks.

Digitized by Google

The weather completely spoiled the operations, for heavy rains continued throughout the month. As "in the Arras battle, this unavoidable delay in the development of our offensive was of the greatest service to the enemy. Valuable time was lost, the troops opposed to us were able to recover from the disorganisation produced by our first attack, and the enemy was given time to bring up reinforcements."(1)

From 1st to 7th September, the 2nd Battalion were partly in support and partly in the front line, and on the 7th they were relieved by the 1st Royal Berks, and went into rest billets at Beuvry, remaining here until 18th. During this period in rest billets, the strict training they underwent was varied by football matches and sports, the 2nd Battalion coming in second in the final Brigade Cross-country Run, while they lost in the final of the Brigade Football Competition, playing against the 17th Middlesex (Footballers') Regiment.

On the 18th, the Battalion moved to Gorre into the Reserve area, relieving the 1st Royal Berks. While here, Gorre and district were heavily shelled by the Germans on the 24th. The Battalion "stood to" for some time, but there was no infantry attack. The same evening they moved into the line again in the Givenchy right sub-sector, relieving the 1st King's, the whole Battalion occupying the front line. This was heavily shelled by the enemy on the 25th, and again on the 30th, when the Germans sent over gas bombs on the Divisional front. No fewer than 100 of these gas shells fell in the Battalion area, and "C" Company, on the left, was badly affected. Fortunately, the wind veered round to the north-east, and the Germans got a dose of their own medicine, for alarm gongs and bells were heard from the direction of Mackensen Trench at mid-day, while later in the afternoon our Trench Mortars had a shoot on certain sections of the German sandbag dumps, preventing the enemy from repairing his line. The Battalion was relieved the same night by the 1st King's, and went into support, Village Line, Windy Corner.(2)

Trench Warfare.

For the first five days of the month of October, 1917, the Battalion remained in support—training, furnishing working parties and cleaning up generally. On October 5th, the 2nd Division was relieved by the 25th Division, and the 2nd Division was transferred from the 11th to the 1st Corps. But before they left this sector, the enemy was given the greatest

(1) Sir Douglas Haig's Fourth Despatch.
(2) Their casualties for the month of September were slight:—3 killed, 3 wounded and 2 gassed.

Digitized by Google

"gassing" ever projected by the British, over 100 tons of gas being projected into his trenches. How the Bosche must have cursed the day he first used it against us in 1915 at Ypres! The Battalion then moved to billets in Bethune. From thence they marched to billets at Burbure, near Lillers, west of Bethune. While here in rest billets, Captain S. Harper was promoted A/Major, and Major G. Dawes, M.C., rejoined and assumed temporary command of the Battalion. He left on the 12th to take command of the 1/21st London Regiment.

The Brigade was inspected on October 15th by General Horne, commanding 1st Army, and after the parade the Battalion marched to Bas Rieux, near Lillers. Lieut.-Colonel C. E. R. G. Alban, D.S.O., rejoined from leave and assumed command of the Battalion. They remained here for the rest of the month, refitting and training. The weather was mild and rainy days few.(1)

Join Second Army.

On November 5th, the 2nd Division moved from Bas Rieux from the 11th Corps, 1st Army, to join the 2nd Corps, 2nd Army, in the Houtkerque area, where further training was carried on until the 23rd, when the 2nd Division was transferred to the 1st Corps, 3rd Army.

By the 6th November, with the taking of Passchendaele, the third Battle of Ypres was drawing to a close. The German attempt to break through had again been foiled. Our troops had fought under such conditions as no soldiers had ever fought before. They had to live for days and nights in morasses, up to their waists in mud and slime, where a false step meant a man being engulfed in a quagmire with no hope of rescue. In addition, they had to endure the ceaseless fire of the German artillery, and then march into battle through mud and slush, exposed to a hailstorm of machine gun fire—but they stopped the Germans. It was a splendid achievement, but it did not provide much comfort for the British High Command. It was realised that the stagnation of another Winter's war would enable the Germans to rest and refit. Owing to the defection of Russia, many enemy Divisions had been brought to the West Front, and many more were to come. If the enemy was not kept occupied, he had it in his power to create a dangerous situation in the Spring of 1918, which, as events showed, he did. In addition to the anxieties of the Allies on the Western Front, the situation in Italy was a cause of grave concern to them. British Divisions had been sent to Italy—the famous 7th Division was one—and had helped to stop the German-Austrian advance; but the situation was still serious.

---

(1) The Battalion's casualties for the month of October was 5 wounded only. They were reinforced by 4 Officers and 165 other ranks.

Digitized by Google

Sir Douglas Haig, much as he desired it, was not able to give his war-weary troops the rest they needed. Another blow had to be struck, and it was decided that, given the element of surprise and attacking on a new front, decisions might be won which would be of vital importance. The sector of the old Siegfried Line, which lay in front of Havrincourt Wood, between the Bapaume—Cambrai Road and the Scheldt Canal, was selected for the attack. "It was a country of rolling downs, grey with the withered grasses of November, and patched with the rank and blackened growths of thistle, dock, and ragwort, which spring up on land once closely tilled and now derelict." Eight miles in front was the town of Cambrai, while half-way the deep cutting of the Scheldt Canal twisted and turned across the land, forming a considerable barrier. On our side of the Canal, the long Flesquiéres ridge ran from south to north, culminating in the dominant point of Bourlon Wood, between the Arras and Bapaume Roads. East of the Canal, the ground fell away to the flat plains of the Scheldt.

"The German defences on this front comprised three main systems of resistance. The first of these three trench systems constituted part of the Hindenburg Line proper, and formed a pronounced salient in the German front. In advance of the Hindenburg Line the enemy had constructed a series of strong forward positions, including La Vacquerie and the north-eastern corner of Havrincourt Wood. Behind it, and at distances respectively varying from a little less to rather more than a mile and from three and a half to four and a half miles, lay the second and third main German systems, known as the Hindenburg Reserve Line, and the Beaurevoir, Masnieres, Marquion Lines."(1)

The Attack on Cambrai.

The point of attack was well chosen. It was dry, open country, where Tanks could operate, and in the big wood of Havrincourt our troops could assemble and remain concealed from German observation. If the attack was successful, it would endanger a vital part of the enemy's communications, and give us command of the main Arras—Cambrai Road; and even if the full result was not achieved, it would give the Germans no rest.

Everything depended on secrecy, and Sir Douglas Haig estimated that he would have forty-eight hours in which to accomplish the task he had set before the German reinforcements could arrive.

Everything favoured the British attack. Tuesday, 20th November, was a heavy, dull day, and at 6.20 a.m. a dense

(1) Sir Douglas Haig's Fifth Despatch, February, 1918.

Digitized by Google

gas and smoke barrage was released everywhere along the front, and behind this screen a long line of Tanks crept forward, while behind the Tanks "quietly and leisurely moved the six Divisions of assault." The enemy was taken utterly unawares. The Tanks cut great lines in his wire, smashing up his machine gun nests and enfilading his trenches, while the British infantry followed and completed the work. Most of our objectives were secured, but the vital point, Bourlon Wood, had yet to be won.

By the morning of the 23rd November, the German reinforcements had begun to arrive in strength, and fresh British troops were rushed into the area in support of the exhausted Divisions which had been fighting since the 20th.

On the 23rd, the 2nd Division, which had been training at Bas Rieux, was transferred from the 2nd Corps, 2nd Army, to the 1st Corps, 3rd Army, and on November 25th marched nine miles to bivouac shelters at Doignies. Next day, they were transferred to the 5th Corps, and relieved the 36th Ulster Division in front of Mœuvres, on the left of Bourlon Wood, the 2nd South Staffords relieving the 9th Inniskilling Fusiliers, 109th Brigade, in the support trenches of the Hindenburg front line, which had been taken by the 36th Ulster Division in the attack on Mœuvres on November 20th.

On arrival at Beaumetz, the Battalion went into bivouac shelter west of Doignies. The road was shelled by the Germans, and the Companies were halted and moved off by platoons at fifty yards interval, on leaving Beaumetz. On arrival in camp, the men were busy in constructing earthen walls round the shelters as a protection against shell and bomb splinters. Next day, November 26th, the Battalion moved from Doignies Camp, leaving Major J. O. R. Harper, 6 Officers and 108 men behind as rear details, and marched *via* Beaucourt to the barricade on the main Bapaume—Cambrai Road, thence to front line as Right Battalion of Left Brigade on 2nd Divisional front.

The move up into line.

There was a heavy snowstorm, and this, with the black darkness of the night, hindered the move up, but the bad conditions prevented the Germans from shelling the road up to the front. The trenches were just slimy ditches, with nearly a foot of liquid mud in them.

The disposition of the 2nd Battalion was as follows:—"A" Company on right, in touch with 22nd Royal Fusiliers (99th Infantry Brigade); "B" Company in Canal Trench running north from "A" Company's line, and in Lock 5; "D" Company left of the Canal du Nord, in touch with the 17th Middlesex Regiment, while "C" Company were in support on left of the Canal.

Digitized by Google

At 6.30 a.m. on November 27th, an attempt was made to secure the whole Bourlon ridge. The 62nd Division, supported by Tanks, attacked on the 2nd South Staffords' left, and secured Bourlon village. Later in the day the Germans counter-attacked, after a violent barrage, and forced the 62nd Division to withdraw from the positions won. The Brigade on the right of the 6th Brigade was threatened, and dispositions of the troops were made to meet the threatened danger. Later, the situation improved, and about 4 p.m. became normal. The 80th now had to submit to very severe shelling from the Germans, who were striving to drive us from the position we held on Bourlon ridge. During the nights of 27th and 28th November, there was active patrolling by our men in front of the lines, but the anticipated counter-attack by the Germans did not occur until November 30th.

The 2nd Division was brought in to relieve the Division on its front, and preparations were made for a final attack which it was hoped would give us what we sought.

Battle of Cambrai.

Meanwhile, the Germans, who had been shaken up by the unexpected attack on Cambrai, brought up sixteen fresh Divisions and renewed the attack on the 30th, when at 8.30 a.m. the Germans put down a very heavy barrage on the Bourlon—Mœuvres—Inchy front, a storm of gas shells falling in the area where the 2nd Battalion were waiting to move out to support the 99th Infantry Brigade on their right.

On the left Brigade (right Brigade front), the Germans pushed their attack forward, and helped by the thick morning mist, captured Lock 5 (E.21. A.1.2) from the eastern side, and debouched from Mœuvres on the sunken road in E.20d., while on the west of the Canal the enemy drove a wedge in the line to E.26. B.4.7.

At the same time the enemy attacked on their left at Masniéres, over-running the 29th Division in flank and rear, which, swinging back its right to form a defensive flank, clung to Masniéres, and beat off all attacks. Meantime, the greater part of the German attacking force had hurled itself, advancing in dense waves of infantry, repeating his tactics employed in the first battle of Ypres.

"In the course of the morning and afternoon of November 30th no less than five principal attacks were made in this area, and on one portion of the attack as many as eleven waves of German Infantry advanced successively to the assault."

At 10.45 a.m. the 80th moved up into close support, south of the Cambrai Road, and west of the Canal. Lieut.-Colonel C. E. R. G. Alban, D.S.O., moved from Battalion Headquarters to the Essex Regiment Headquarters, and the 2nd

Digitized by Google

Battalion was disposed as follows:—"C" Company on the right, "A" Company in centre prolonging the line to the Canal, "B" Company on the Canal trench, while "D" Company remained in Reserve.

"A" Company were in close support of the 17th Middlesex Regiment, who were being withdrawn from an exposed position when the storm of the German thrust broke on them. Heavy shelling caused casualties in "A" Company, and about 4 p.m. this Company moved to near the 1st King's Liverpool Regiment Headquarters and commenced a bombing attack up the trench. They made good progress, and bombing was continued throughout the night with such success that by 5 a.m. on the morning of December 1st this Company had reached a fork in the trench where the block was strongly held by the enemy. Bombing attacks were made on their right and left flanks, but failed to make any progress, and then "A" Company made a block in the trench and garrisoned the whole trench. About 10 a.m. on December 1st the Germans made a desperate attempt to bomb their way down the trench, but were ejected by "A" Company. To make matters worse for this Company, at 11 a.m. "B" Company of the 17th Middlesex Regiment were driven out of the trench west of the Canal, leaving the right flank of "A" Company (South Staffords) exposed. They had to endure the brunt of two further German attacks, which were successfully repelled, and were heavily shelled for the rest of the day, but they held on to their position, and fought off bombing attack after attack, until they were relieved in the early morning of December 2nd by "B" Company, 2nd Highland Light Infantry, but even then their work was not done, for on the night of 3rd/4th December they carried bombs to the front line.

Attack on Bourlon Wood.

"B" Company (South Staffords) were in support of the 13th Essex Regiment (right Battalion). At 9.30 a.m., No. 8 Platoon of "B" Company moved up from Kangaroo Trench to Canal Trench, while No. 7 Platoon carried S.A.A. and bombs for the 13th Essex Regiment. At 9.40 a.m. Nos. 5 and 6 Platoons moved up to Canal Trench, passing through two German barrages on their way up. On arrival at the trench the Lewis gun of No 8 Platoon engaged the Germans on the right of Canal Trench, checking their progress.

"One Company of the 13th Essex Regiment finding itself isolated, held a Council of War, and unanimously determined to fight to the last, and have 'no surrender.' Two runners who were sent to notify this decision to Battalion Headquarters succeeded in getting through to our lines and delivered their message. During the remainder of this afternoon and far into the following night this gallant Company was heard

Digitized by Google

fighting, and there is little doubt that they carried out to a man their heroic resolution."(1)

On reaching Canal Trench the Officer Commanding of "B" Company (South Staffords) found and collected some stragglers from the 13th Essex Regiment, who informed him that the Germans had captured Lock 5, had got into the sunken road, and were coming down Canal Trench in force. By a skilful disposal of Nos. 5 and 6 Platoons this advance was stopped, the South Staffords winning up this trench for about 80 yards. Here they joined three sections of No. 8 Platoon (South Staffords) and some men of "B" Company, 13th Essex, posting two Lewis guns on either side of trench.

Meantime the Germans were advancing on both right and left flanks. The Lewis gunners and No. 8 Platoon immediately engaged the enemy, closely followed by Nos. 5 and 6 Platoons, and drove the Germans back with bombs and rifle fire until they were within 10 yards of the sunken road, here the supply of bombs gave out, and a block was made and held until they were relieved.

Attack on Bourlon Wood.

All day November 30th and December 1st this Company held the Canal Trench, repelling fresh bombing attacks, and hotly engaging the Germans on both flanks, inflicting heavy casualties on them. At 12 midnight November 30th, No. 7 Platoon ("B" Company, S.S.R.) was brought up to attack the sunken road, but the constant fresh German reinforcements proved too strong an obstacle for them to break through, but at 3 a.m. on the morning of December 1st, one platoon of "B" Company (South Staffs. Regt.) with one platoon of 13th Essex Regiment, made a raid on sunken road, and in spite of heavy enemy rifle fire, machine guns and bombs, some of the party succeeded in reaching sunken road, where they bombed the Germans, inflicting severe casualties. The 13th Essex Regiment was now withdrawn from Canal Trench, which was then held by "B" Company, South Staffords, until they were relieved by the 22nd Royal Fusiliers, at midnight on 1st/2nd December. Afterwards this Company carried bombs to front line during the night of 3rd/4th December, and then moved back to the old British line.

"C" Company (South Staffords) at 11 a.m. on November 30th, moved up in close support on the right, and came under the orders of 1st King's Liverpool Regiment, who, although heavily attacked, were holding out gallantly. Next morning, at 4 a.m., December 1st, this Company joined "A" Company (South Staffords), and with 2 platoons of the Middlesex Regiment, under Captain Pritchard (2nd South Staffs. Regiment)

(1) Sir Douglas Haig's Fifth Despatch, February, 1918.

Digitized by Google

took part in a bombing raid on the Germans, being well supported by Stokes mortars. Good progress was made by "C" Company, and a defensive flank formed. From 9.30 a.m. on December 1st the Germans repeatedly bombed the Company's left flank with machine gun support, but were driven back every time, and the line was held until 11.45 p.m., when "C" Company (South Staffords) was relieved by the 2nd Highland Light Infantry, and moved back to Reserve, but early in the morning of December 3rd they were called upon to support the 2nd Highland Light Infantry, where they remained until relieved at midnight by the 4th Seaforth Highlanders, and then returned to the old British line.

"D" Company (South Staffords) at 10 a.m. on November 30th, moved up into the Reserve trenches and furnished carrying parties for the 1st King's Liverpool Regiment, and at midnight moved up to Canal Trench to support the 13th Essex Regiment, who were suffering heavy casualties. They succeeded in placing a Lewis gun 150 yards up Canal Trench, and at 9 p.m. on December 1st they were called upon to support the 2nd Highland Light Infantry, who were heavily attacked by the Germans. Repeated bombing attacks by the enemy were everywhere repelled, and at 4 p.m. on December 2nd "D" Company (South Staffords) moved up to the front line to replace the 2nd Highland Light Infantry, who had been withdrawn, "D" Company holding this line against all attacks until they were relieved at 11 p.m. the same night, when they moved back to the old British line, where the whole of the 2nd Battalion was concentrated.(1)

Attack on Bourlon Wood.

The weather for the month of November continued mild until the 25th, with moderate rainfall; after the 25th, it became dry and frosty for remainder of month. The maximum trench strength of the Battalion during this month was 34 Officers and 696 other ranks. Sickness was slight, only 25 being sent to hospital during the whole month.

By 8 a.m. on the morning of December 1st the German attack on the east side of the Canal had been repulsed, but the enemy had penetrated into our lines on the west side. At 11 a.m. the 2nd Highland Light Infantry came up in support

(1) The 2nd Battalion's casualty list for these two days of fierce fighting was :—
2nd Lieut. J. A. McKee, killed.
Captain R. H. Atkinson; Lieuts. C. Eastlaugh and F. C. F. Gilchrist, and 2nd Lieut. Portman—all wounded.
They also lost :—
KILLED.—18 other ranks.
WOUNDED.—75 other ranks.
MISSING.—2 other ranks.
Of the four Companies in the Battalion, "A" and "C" Companies suffered the most.

Digitized by Google

on this side, and bombing up the trenches gradually drove the Germans back to the same lines they had started from.

For four days the 2nd South Staffords were resting and refitting in the Velu Wood, and on 8th December the 6th Infantry Brigade relieved the 5th Infantry Brigade, the 2nd South Staffords relieving the 24th Royal Fusiliers as right support Battalion, with Headquarters at Lock 7. They were heavily shelled by the Germans during this period of trench duty, but no fresh attacks were made, and the battle gradually died down. On the 14th December the 2nd South Staffords were relieved by the 2nd Oxford and Bucks L.I., and went into O'Shea Camp, Le Bucquicre, in Divisional Reserve.

Trench Warfare.

Training was carried out here, and working parties furnished daily until 23rd December, when the 2nd South Staffords relieved the 17th Middlesex as left front Battalion in the right Brigade sector. "D" Company on right of Canal, "C" Company centre, "A" Company left, with "B" Company as Reserve. "C" Company, in the centre, was subjected to enemy trench mortar fire during the day, and Lock 7 was also shelled by the Germans, but no material damage was done.

Christmas Day was fairly quiet, and there was snow most of the day. Next day the Germans shelled our front line and supports continually from 11.30 a.m. to 6.30 p.m., after which the bombardment slackened, and the 2nd South Staffords were relieved on December 26th by the 1st K.R.R.C. as left Battalion. The 2nd South Staffords then moved to shelters in Spoil Heap, J.35a, and went into Brigade Reserve.

On the 29th December the 2nd South Staffords relieved the 17th Middlesex in the 6th Brigade front line and posts, which they held until the end of the month, being shelled by the enemy most of the time, getting many direct hits on their front line, while the back areas were deluged with German gas shells, some of which fell close to Battalion Headquarters.

Next day the German bombardment continued, especially on the right of the Battalion, and a few gas shells fell on our front line and supports without doing any damage.

The position in Bourlon Wood so splendidly won could not be maintained, and the salient driven into the German Siegfried Line had to be shortened. This was skilfully achieved by the 7th December, and although local fighting continued until the end of December, the battle of Cambrai was over, and this front had returned to normal winter inactivity.

Trench warfare had again set in, and it was not unwelcome, for after their strenuous fighting at Cambrai the Battalion was not only tired and exhausted, but weak in numbers. The front held by the 2nd Division was again re-organised, being divided into two equal frontages for each forward Brigade.

Digitized by Google

"Twelve days in the front line and six out," was the new order.

The new line held by the British Forces "corresponded roughly to the old Hindenburg Reserve Line and ran from a point about one and a half miles north by east of La Vacquerie, north of Ribecourt and Flesquieres to the Canal du Nord, about one and a half miles north of Havrincourt, an advance of between two and a half miles in front of the line held by us prior to the attack of the 20th November. We therefore retained in our possession an important section of the Hindenburg trench system, with its excellent dug-outs and other advantages.

"In this fighting, the 2nd Division, the 47th (London) and 56th (London) Divisions (both Territorials) greatly distinguished themselves, and there were accomplished many deeds of great heroism.

"They were repeatedly attacked by vastly superior numbers, who were again and again repulsed, and but for their steady courage and staunchness in defence, the success gained by the Germans on the right of our battle front might have had serious consequences."(1)

The maximum trench strength of the 2nd Battalion for the month was 19 Officers, 501 other ranks and the maximum ration strength was 22 Officers and 585 other ranks.

Reinforcements received in drafts being 4 Officers and 104 other ranks, while 28 other ranks rejoined from hospital.

---

(1) Sir Douglas Haig's Fifth Despatch, February, 1918.
The South Stafford's casualties for the month of December were:—
KILLED.—1 Officer, 15 other ranks.
WOUNDED.—6 Officers, 69 other ranks.
MISSING.—1 other rank.

Digitized by Google

RECORD OF THE 2ND BATTALION, 1918.

Trench Warfare—Salvage Work—In Divisional Reserve—The Great German Attack—Battle of Haplincourt—Heroic Stand of "A" Company—Colonel Alban Wounded—The Black Month—Trench Warfare—Attack and Capture of Ervillers—Battle of Albert—Second Battle of Arras—Battle of Havrincourt—Capture of Orival Wood—Battle of Cambrai—Back Again to Mons—The Armistice—The March into Germany—Home Again.

OWING to the disappearance of Russia as a fighting element on the Allies' side, the Germans were able to move large numbers of their troops from the Eastern to the Western front. This transference of enemy Divisions had begun early in November, 1917, and had seriously affected the initial success of the Allies in the Battle of Cambrai; and it was certain this movement westward would continue until the Germans had a numerical superiority.

In view of this new situation, it became necessary to change the policy governing the operations of the British Army from an offensive to a defensive one. Further, it had been arranged as from September, 1917, that the British troops should relieve the French troops on the British right, and take over an additional front line of twenty-eight miles, extending to the village of Barisis, just south of the River Oise; and by the end of January, 1918, the relief of the French had been completed, and at that date the British armies were holding some 125 miles of active front. The heavy fighting endured by the British "during 1917 had left the Army at a low ebb in regard both to training and numbers. It was therefore of first importance, in view of the expected German offensive, to fill up the ranks as rapidly as possible and provide ample facilities for training."(1)

Trench Warfare.

The first day of January was bitterly cold, with some snow, and the 2nd Battalion occupied the 6th Brigade front line and posts in the Moeuvres sector. There was normal trench warfare, and next day, at 8 p.m., the 2nd Battalion moved to Spoil Heap Camp, Hermies, the morning of the 3rd being spent in resting and cleaning up. This afternoon, at 5 p.m., the 2nd Battalion moved to the Fifth Corps Reserve Area, and went into camp at Rocquigny. They were delayed on the way up, owing to S.O.S. signals being sent up from the front line, but the delay was short, for this attack by the Germans was beaten off.

(1) Sir Douglas Haig's Sixth Despatch.

Digitized by Google

They remained in Corps Reserve at Rocquigny until 23rd January, undergoing strict training. January 5th was observed as Christmas Day, the men's Christmas dinners being served in two large huts, and were much appreciated. Unfortunately, the weather continued wet, and most of the training had to be carried on in huts. On the evening of January 8th the camp was bombed by four German aircraft, who succeeded in dropping bombs on the cookhouse, killing one and wounding four other ranks.

For the greater part of the month of January the weather was very severe, hard frosts making the ground so hard that parapet building in the trenches was very much retarded. For many days, too, there were heavy falls of snow, making outdoor training almost impossible; but an enormous amount of work was done on the ranges and in specialist training, though life was most uncomfortable under these trying weather conditions.

On the 24th January, the 6th Infantry Brigade moved up into the Divisional Reserve area, relieving the 188th Infantry Brigade, the 2nd Battalion, South Staffordshire Regiment relieving the Anson (Naval) Battalion at Equancourt. Training was continued here for three days, and on the 28th January the 2nd Battalion moved up to relieve the 24th Royal Fusiliers as support Battalion in the La Vacquerie left sector, where working parties were provided for work on the front line and supports each day; and on 31st January the 2nd Battalion relieved the 13th Essex Regiment, taking over the front line and posts in the right Battalion sector. **At La Vacquerie.**

The new front line now taken over by the 2nd Battalion was not a position of ease, for the trenches were very wet and muddy, and in some places impassable. The front consisted of isolated posts, the garrisons of which were relieved every twenty-four hours, and much work was required to provide dry standings and shelters at these front posts. The work entailed in clearing the front and communication trenches in this sector was heavy and exacting, but it was cheerfully done by all ranks. In addition to this heavy spade work, much valuable salvage was recovered by the 2nd Division, who, during January, had collected war material valued at £31,000 in their area. They had the satisfaction of knowing that their record of salvage was greater than all the other Divisions of the 5th Corps put together.(1) **Salvage Work.**

During this month the 2nd Battalion was reinforced by 14 Officers and 327 other ranks, making up their maximum strength to 22 Officers and 672 other ranks.(2)

---

(1) Official Report.

(2) Their casualties for the month were :—Killed, 4 other ranks; 9 wounded.

Digitized by Google

The Battalion remained in the La Vacquerie sector all the month of February. There was normal trench warfare until the 3rd, when the Germans shelled the lines throughout the day, causing many casualties by direct hits on left support Company's Headquarters.

The position held by the 2nd Battalion was the right sub-sector front line and posts of the 6th Infantry Brigade area, "B" and "C" Companies occupying front line and posts, with "A" and "D" Companies as supports. At this time, the posts could only be reached at night, and owing to the bad condition of the front line, repair work could only be begun after dark, so the process of "linking up" was slow. Fortunately, the carrying parties were able to bring up hot food to the garrisons each night, and a considerable amount of work was done.

On February 3rd, on relief by the 13th Essex Regiment, the 2nd Battalion moved to a camp in Havrincourt Wood, remaining there refitting and training for four days. The camp was shelled each day by German artillery, and during the night of February 5th/6th German high velocity shells fell in the camp intermittently for five hours, so that it meant constant work in altering the position of the tents, and placing them a greater distance apart to minimise the risk of the exploding shells. While in this camp, the 6th Infantry Brigade of the 2nd Division was re-organised so as to consist of three instead of four Battalions. This was done under instructions from the Army Council, and applied to all the Divisions engaged on the Western front; it was designed to allow of the eventual brigading of American troops with British Divisions.

Havrincourt Wood Camp.

This change of a Division from a thirteen Battalion to a ten Battalion basis, not only reduced the fighting strength of a Division, but to some extent affected the fighting efficiency of units, by introducing unfamiliar Battalions. It necessitated "new methods of tactical handling of the troops and the discarding of old methods to which subordinate Commanders had been accustomed."

The 6th Infantry Brigade was now constituted as follows:— 2nd South Staffords, 1st King's Regt., 17th Royal Fusiliers.

In the evening of 6th February the 2nd Battalion relieved the 13th Essex Regiment in the front line and posts, and next day the Germans shelled their front with heavies and trench mortars, obtaining direct hits and causing a considerable amount of damage. Our artillery retaliated with 4.5 howitzers and 18-pounders. Each night, until the 9th February, the Battalion was engaged on repairs to the damaged front line and new wiring for posts. On the night of February 9th/10th, the Divisional area was divided into three Brigade areas:—

Digitized by Google

Right, Centre, Left. The 6th Infantry Brigade were allotted to hold the Left Brigade area, as follows:—Front Battalion in line, with Headquarters Surrey Road, at R.8.b.8.1. Support Battalion with Headquarters R.7.d.70-45. Reserve Battalion in Divisional Reserve Camp, Metz. On relief by the 1st King's (Liverpool) Regiment in front line, the 2nd Battalion moved into Divisional Reserve at Metz, remaining here training for four days, when they moved up as Brigade support, "B" and "D" Companies and 11 and 12 Platoons of "C" Company relieving 17th Royal Fusiliers, while "A" Company and 9 and 10 Platoons, "C" Company, relieved one Company of 1st King's (Liverpool) Regiment in close support; and on the 15th the 2nd Battalion took over the front line and posts from the 17th Royal Fusiliers. For this four days' tour in the trenches the 2nd Battalion had to endure severe shelling from the German heavy guns, the back areas being repeatedly searched for preventing reliefs coming up. German aeroplanes were very active, passing over the South Staffords' lines each day, bombing the trenches and back areas. Our own airmen were equally active, and did not give the Germans much opportunity for observing what was going on, although one day the Germans had six balloons up on this Divisional front.

After four days' rest in Divisional Reserve, the 6th Infantry Brigade took over from the 5th Infantry Brigade the front line from its present right, R.9.b. to R.15.a.8.3. The 2nd Battalion relieved the 17th Royal Fusiliers as support Battalion, holding this position until February 26th, when they moved up to the front line and posts in La Vacquerie sector, taking over this front from the 17th Royal Fusiliers, the Battalion being disposed as follows:—"A" Company on right, "B" Company centre, "C" Company on left, with "D" Company as support in Victory Lane. Battalion Headquarters were at R.8.b.8.1. Surrey Road. At 6.50 p.m., on the 27th, a number of German gas shells fell in the vicinity of Battalion Headquarters, filling Headquarters with gas, but fortunately there were no casualties, and gas masks were worn for less than an hour. Half an hour later, the enemy bombarded the South Staffords' front line and supports, opening an intense bombardment on their right, in the direction of Gonnelieu, which lasted for one hour. This was renewed again at 5.15 a.m. on the 28th, but little damage was done.(1)

In Divisional Reserve.

The maximum strength of the Battalion for the month being 36 Officers and 796 other ranks, while they received by way of reinforcements 46 other ranks.

(1) For this month's tour, partly in the front line trenches and in reserve, the casualties of the 2nd Battalion were:—Killed, 13 other ranks. Wounded, 1 Officer and 31 other ranks.

Digitized by Google

Early in February, the 2nd Division had been notified of the impending formation of the Machine Gun Corps, and Machine Gun Companies from the newly-formed 2nd Battalion, Machine Gun Corps, were, from the 5th March, 1918, attached to each Brigade of the 2nd Division. In the strenuous times of the great German offensive, which began in March, 1918, these Machine Gun Companies rendered great service to the respective Brigades to whom they were attached.

With the opening of March, 1918, it was seen that the Germans were ready for their expected great offensive. This had been known to the Allies as a possibility from the close of the year 1917, and for the past two months as great preparations for it had been made by the Allies as by the Germans themselves. But the British were not in such a favourable position as the Germans: they had not such great reserves of men to draw upon, and, in addition, a vast amount of work had to be done in the construction of new defences on the ground they had captured from the enemy south-east of Arras. In this area, which the Germans had devastated in their retirement last year, it meant making new roads, extending the old communications, and the laying out of new railways.

Trench Warfare.

"All available men of the fighting units, with the exception of a very small proportion undergoing training, and all labour units were employed on these tasks. Though the time and labour available were in no way adequate if, as was suspected, the enemy intended to commence his offensive operations in the early Spring, a large proportion of the work was in fact completed before the enemy launched his great attack."(1)

Part of this activity in defence, as well as duty in the trenches, had been the 2nd Battalion's portion for the months of January and February, and was continued until March 21st, when the great German attack began. At this time the 2nd Battalion was in camp at Rocquigny. The object of the German attack was to drive a wedge between the British and French, separating the two, and then to "roll up" the British forces behind the upper Somme and drive them westward, compelling a retreat of the whole British line towards the sea. If this attack was successful, the Germans would be safe from serious danger from the French for at least a week, as it would take this time before the French reserves from the Champagne district could arrive on the scene.

The point selected for the attack was from Arras to the south-west of Amiens, on a front of sixty miles, this portion

(1) Sir Douglas Haig's Sixth Despatch.

Digitized by Google

of the British front being held by the Third and Fifth Armies. The Third Army front, under General Byng, ran from just north of the Arras—Douai road to near Gouzeacourt in the south, where it joined up with the Fifth Army, commanded by General Gough, whose front ran from Gouzeacourt to the Oise, south-east of Amiens. These two Armies, each of four Corps, comprised thirty-four Divisions in all. Of these, Byng's Army had ten Divisions in line, and Gough's eleven, but the latter were strung out over a much longer front, the average for each of Gough's Divisions being about 6,750 yards of front. Against these two Armies was flung the weight of seventy-six German Divisions.

During the first two weeks of March the German artillery fire had been normal, but from the 6th to the 13th the enemy began to project gas shells of a particularly virulent type on the British front. This "mustard gas" was very insidious and most terrible in its consequences, men becoming temporarily blinded, while throat and lungs were seriously affected, the German intention being to seriously incapacitate our forces by deliberately inflicting upon them six weeks' torture, if, indeed, they were fortunate enough to escape a horrible death. Fortunately, the 2nd South Staffords suffered fewer casualties than other Battalions. For hours unceasing the Germans deluged the areas occupied by the 2nd Division, causing heavy casualties.

During this period the weather had been dry and bright, and as early as the 14th our airplanes had reported a big concentration well back of the German lines; and the Third and Fifth Armies were warned to be ready. Many raids were made to secure information, and, from the evidence of prisoners, it appeared that Thursday, March 21st, was the day appointed for the German attack; but the secret had been so well kept that, even when the attack was launched, it was not clear where the main thrust would be made, as the whole British line was bombarded all along the battle front.

The Attack Launched.

On Tuesday, March 19th, the fine weather broke, and a drizzling rain set in, clearing on the Wednesday, "with the result that a thick mist was drawn out of the ground and muffled all the folds of the downs." This fog continued for several days, and under its cover the Germans had been pushing up troops into line, until, at dawn on March 21st, they had no fewer than seventy-six Divisions opposed to the British thirty-four Divisions, and within 3,000 yards of our outposts.

At exactly a quarter to five on the fatal morning of the 21st the whole weight of the many thousands of German guns was released on the doomed British front. The positions were known, and shells were dropped in the front line, the battle

Digitized by Google

zone, lines of communications and artillery positions, while the back areas were drenched with gas, which hung in the mist for hours. Our artillery replied as best they could, but no gunner could see more than fifty yards in front; and the first thing our outposts knew was that the Germans had penetrated the lines and were well in their rear, and these posts were overwhelmed before they could send back warning. Soon the Germans were attacking in our forward zone, and here the British resistance did all that was expected of it, aye, and more, for in many cases these garrisons and redoubts fought to the last gasp, resisting far on in the day, until by dusk there came that silence which meant destruction.

The 2nd Battalion, South Staffords, was in camp at Rocquigny, after being relieved in the La Vacquerie centre sector on the night of March 20th by portions of the 17th and 18th Middlesex Regiments. At 5 a.m. on the morning of the 21st, orders were received for the Battalion to "stand to," and be ready to move to any part of the Corps front at five minutes' notice. Next day, the Battalion moved to a point north-west of Haplincourt, remaining there in reserve until 4.30 p.m. From this point they moved in a north-easterly direction, taking up a position in the "Green Line," covering a frontage from approximately I.28.a.21 to I.28.d.6.0. "A" and "C" Companies were posted in the front line, with "B" and "D" Companies in support. There was a Battalion of the Cheshire Regiment on their left and the 1st King's (Liverpool) Regiment on their right. Immediately the 2nd Battalion was in position, work was commenced on digging in and carrying up ammunition. At this time the enemy was reported as holding a line running through Morchies in a south-easterly direction. During the night the Germans heavily shelled the line held by the 2nd Battalion and their support areas. All through the night Officers' patrols were out well in front of the position, but no parties of the enemy were met with. At 5.30 a.m., on the 23rd, it became necessary, on account of heavy shelling, to change Battalion Headquarters. There was intermittent shelling throughout the day, and during the morning men of the 51st and 25th Divisions fell back on the 2nd Battalion's position, and reported that the Germans had broken through and were advancing on Beugny and Lebucquiere. These stragglers were collected and held, with the object of strengthening the South Staffords' line, which was rather weakly held. At intervals, in the mist, small parties of Germans, carrying what appeared to be trench mortars or machine guns, were observed coming over the ridge in front of their position, and later in the afternoon the enemy registered several trench mortars on the Battalion's position.

Move to Haplincourt.

Digitized by Google

Owing to the density of the mist, making it extremely difficult for our gunners to range their targets, numerous complaints were received from the different Companies that our artillery was firing short, as a large number of the shells were falling between the front and support lines. Patrols were out during the night, and heard Germans moving material, apparently corrugated iron, from Lebucquiere; and the enemy was reported to be massing behind Velu Wood.

At 8.50 a.m., on March 24th, the enemy barrage opened on the Staffords' front line, and the Germans were observed massing behind the ridge in I.23.d. and 24.c. At 9.35 a.m. the barrage lifted and the Germans attacked the front held by the Cheshire Regiment, and succeeded in driving the Cheshires back about 200 yards, where, at 10.30 a.m., they were rallied, and with the assistance of a platoon of "C" Company (South Staffords), under 2nd Lieut. J. Atkinson, who was killed, made a counter-attack, which was successful in driving the enemy back to the ridge, just east of Lebucquiere, from which the attack began. About 2 p.m., a fresh German attack was launched against the entire front held by the 6th Brigade, and shortly afterwards troops well on the right of the position were seen retiring in large numbers in the direction of Haplincourt. The 17th Royal Fusiliers, on the South Staffords' right, attempted to collect these men and make a counter-attack, but were unsuccessful in their efforts. By this time the Cheshire Regiment had fallen back, leaving the left flank of the South Staffords in the air. Orders were then given for Companies to retire on Battalion Headquarters and to man the road between Velu and Haplincourt, the retirement being covered by fire from details at Battalion Headquarters.

Battle of Haplincourt.

"C" Company (South Staffords) retired shortly after the Cheshire Regiment, apparently moving along the Lebucquiere —Fremicourt road, where they were evidently cut off by a mass of Germans, as none of them were seen afterwards.

"A" Company made a fine attempt to hold up the enemy, but in their dogged resistance they held on a little too long, and were outnumbered, with the result that the majority of these brave men were either killed or taken prisoners. "B" and "D" Companies retired in a very orderly fashion to the position held by Battalion Headquarters. Lieut.-Colonel Alban, D.S.O., then ordered "B" Company, under Captain Portbury, to fall back in extended order and take up a position on the sunken road running through O.3.a. and cover the retirement of the remainder of the Battalion. The Battalion then retired in four lines at intervals, Lieut.-Colonel Alban, D.S.O., remaining with the last party, consisting of a few Battalion Headquarters details. By the time the last party

Heroic Stand by "A" Company.

Digitized by Google

left, the Germans had advanced to some huts and tents within about 200 yards of Battalion Headquarters, where they immediately planted some machine guns and snipers. This made the retirement from this position to the ridge behind very difficult, as about 700 yards of open ground had to be crossed, exposed to heavy machine gun and rifle fire.

Lieut.-Col. Alban, D.S.O., Wounded.

Shortly after leaving the position, Lieut.-Colonel Alban, D.S.O., was wounded, and Captain Williams, M.C., Medical Officer, supported him, helping him along for a short distance. When they had gone about fifty yards, the Commanding Officer was wounded again, this time very seriously, and Captain Williams, M.C., with the assistance of 2nd Lieut. Bona and Private Gavin, carried Lieut.-Colonel Alban the remainder of the distance, notwithstanding the heavy fire which was directed upon them. Captain Williams was given a D.S.O. for this act of gallantry.

"Never, throughout the four years of war which had gone before, had the gallant 2nd South Staffords proved themselves such stout soldiers as on March 24th, 1918.

Battle of Haplincourt.

"Further to the left, the 2nd South Staffords were ordered to retire on their Battalion Headquarters, a mile north of Haplincourt. One Company, following the Cheshires (a Battalion belonging to the 4th Corps, on the left of the 6th Infantry Brigade) was apparently cut off, as none of them have been seen since. Another Company, in that splendid spirit in which grit and enthusiasm outran prudence, fought and fought on till retirement was impossible, and only one or two escaped to tell the tale of the last stand. The other two Companies reached Battalion Headquarters in perfect order, though hard pressed by the enemy. A further retirement, one Company at a time, was directed towards Haplincourt, and, in extended order, the men faced the ordeal of crossing the valley down which concentrated machine gun fire was poured from the direction of Lebucquiere." (Official narrative.)[1]

The position along the sunken road was held for a short time, and then orders were given to retire on Beaulencourt, just south of Bapaume. This was done in orderly fashion, and a position was taken up on the south-east of the village in support of a Battalion of the 51st Division, who were holding the line of the road, and prolonged the battle front towards the outskirts of Le Transloy. The Germans at this time were reported to be holding Le Transloy, having pushed forward well south of Bapaume. Orders were received shortly afterwards for all troops to evacuate the position, and the remnants of the old 80th, under Major E. O. Kay, moved

(1) History 2nd Division, p. 567.

Digitized by Google

back through Gueudecourt to Flers, where they just missed running into a party of Bosche. From this point the Battalion marched straight across country, over the old Somme battle-field, to Eaucourt L'Abbaye, and took up a position in a sunken road south-east of Le Barque, near the main Amiens —Bapaume road, holding it from about 10 p.m. until 5 a.m. on the morning of March 25th.

At 5.15 a.m. that morning the Battalion moved still further back, and took up a position near to Courcelette, where they snatched a hasty breakfast. This position was held for the greater part of the day, but the German pressure became too great, and they were driven back further north behind Miraumont. War-worn and weary, towards evening the Battalion marched to Beaucourt-sur-Ancre, and took up a position on the high ground behind Hamel, in support of the 17th Royal Fusiliers. At this time the strength of the Battalion was only four Officers, including the Medical Officer, and about 80 men.

Beaucourt-sur-Ancre.

The German pressure continued, and it was reported they were now advancing on Beaucourt-sur-Ancre.

Next day, the position held was strengthened by the addition of three Lewis guns and teams from Tank Corps. During the morning the Germans were observed massing men and guns on Railway Road, and also behind the ridge in K.17.a.

During the night of the 26th/27th the remnants of the 2nd Battalion, South Staffords, were relieved by a New Zealand Regiment, and marched to Mailly-Maillet, and at 5 p.m. on the 27th orders were received for the Battalion to move into support at Englebelmer in relief of a Battalion of the 63rd Division. On arrival, patrols were put out in front of the village, their billets being shelled at intervals during their tour here, and on the night of 29th/30th they were sent to relieve a Battalion of the 99th Infantry Brigade in the front line in Aveluy Wood; and on the night of 30th/31st the Battalion was relieved in the front line by "C" Company of a composite Battalion and then moved to Hedauville, going into rest billets.(1)

---

(1) The maximum trench strength of the 2nd Battalion for the month of March was 28 Officers and 648 other ranks, and their casualties for the month's fighting were:—

KILLED.—2 Officers and 10 other ranks,

WOUNDED.—7 Officers and 125 other ranks,

MISSING.—10 Officers and 341 other ranks,

while 3 Officers and 54 other ranks were in hospital, sick.

Digitized by Google

In this great second battle of the Somme, "the fight had begun with an attack by sixty-four German Divisions on thirty-two British. By the end of March, seventy-six German Divisions had engaged thirty-seven British." But the disparity was far greater than two to one—in many parts of the front the Germans outnumbered our men by three and four to one. The Germans had won the first round, but the Allies, although a long way from safety, had re-established their front and were beginning to receive the badly needed reinforcements. It had been a black month for the British, who only succeeded in securing their retreat because of the stubborn valour of the British soldier, who again and again miraculously averted what seemed to be complete disaster by refusing to accept defeat. The British had now retired to the old British front line from which the advance was made in 1916. During the month of April a new determined German attack on Ypres was begun on April 9th. Here again the enemy were favoured by a thick fog, in which they achieved a considerable amount of success, the fighting lasting until the last day of April.

The Black Month.

For the first week of April the 2nd Battalion were partly in rest billets at the village of Hedauville, north-west of Albert, and was placed under the command of Major W. C. Smith, who was also commanding the 1st King's (Liverpool) Regiment, and on April 1st the Battalion moved to Englebelmer as support Battalion. As the village was frequently shelled by the Germans, they occupied a bivouac just outside it, and were relieved on the 3rd at midday by the 63rd Division, Hood Battalion, and marched to Halloy, where, on arrival, they found a new draft of 350 other ranks awaiting them. This new draft and 51 other ranks (from the composite Battalion under Colonel Murray-Lyon, H.L.I.) were organised into Companies, and the Battalion settled down to a steady routine of training at Nuncq Camp until April 10th. On the 9th, Major E. R. Orme, M.C., Lovat's Scouts, took over command of the Battalion from Major W. C. Smith, who took command of the 1st King's (Liverpool) Regiment. On the 12th April, they moved to Barly, a few miles in rear of Arras. The fresh German thrust to break through between the British and French forces was now directed against the front between Arras and Ypres, and the 2nd Battalion was brought into the front line again at Boisleux-au-Mont, just south of Arras, and close to the main road, Arras—Bapaume. Here, on 14th April, they took over the right sub-sector of the left section of this front, relieving the 2nd Scots Guards, 3rd Guards Brigade. The line was held by the Battalion, and the Companies were disposed as follows:—"A" and "B" Companies right and left front Companies respectively, "C" Company in support, and "D" Company in reserve.

Refitting and Training, Hedauville.

Digitized by Google

It was impossible to do any cooking in the line, so hot tea and rations had to be sent up each night to the various Companies. For two days there was normal trench warfare, but at 9 a.m. on April 16th, the Germans, in considerable strength, attacked the 1st King's (Liverpool) Regiment, in the left sub-sector, and, gaining a footing in the front line trench, separated 1 Officer and 20 other ranks, forcing them back on to the left of the South Staffords' front line. "C" Company (South Staffords), who were in support, immediately made a defensive flank by lining the railway embankment in front of their position. Two platoons of this Company ("C") were placed at the disposal of the Commanding Officer, 1st King's (Liverpool) Regiment, as reinforcements, but only one of these was used by him. This platoon was sent to assist a bombing attack from the north, organised by the Commanding Officer of 1st King's (Liverpool) Regiment. The South Staffords' left front Company, under 2nd Lieut. Wright, then organised a bombing attack northwards up the front line trench in conjunction with the isolated men of the 1st King's Regiment. This was conducted with such vigour that the Germans were forced back, and a block was established well forward in the trench, and by 6.20 p.m. the whole of the trench was cleared of the enemy, when the conditions again became normal.

Counter-Attack by South Staffords.

The 17th Royal Fusiliers were to have relieved the 2nd South Staffords on the night of April 16th, but in view of what had happened they relieved the 1st King's (Liverpool) Regiment, the South Staffords holding the line until the 18th. During these two days trench warfare was normal, but at 4.5 a.m. on the 18th there was a big artillery and gas concentration by our artillery on Boyelles, on the right of the Battalion's position, a large sugar factory there giving the Germans full observation of our front line. It was arranged that the 5th Canadian Infantry Brigade should take over part of the front line of the left Battalion (17th Royal Fusiliers) as far down as the railway, and this was completed before the 2nd South Staffords were relieved by the 1st King's (Liverpool) Regiment. The 2nd Battalion then moved into Brigade Reserve at Blairville, the 6th Brigade having two Battalions in the front line and one in reserve.

The Battalion was accommodated in huts, with the exception of "C" Company, which went into shelters under Railway Bank, with a view of garrisoning a defended post in S.9.a., and came under direct orders of Brigade. "B" Company also went into the Quarry in Purple Line at S.7.b.5.5. On the 19th April the Battalion rested, and were fitted out with clean clothes. Next day they relieved the 17th Royal Fusiliers in the left sub-sector. Each of the front line Companies had three platoons in the front line and one in immediate support. Battalion Headquarters were absolutely

Boisleux Trenches.

Digitized by Google

inadequate for accommodation, and afforded no protection from fire. Here they remained until 24th April, when they took over from the 5th Canadian Infantry Brigade (26th Canadian Battalion) the part of front line trench south of Divisional boundary, which they had temporarily relieved this Brigade from on the night of 17th/18th April. Later, the 2nd South Staffords were relieved by the 1st King's (Liverpool) Regiment, and moved into Brigade support at Blairville, "B" and "C" Companies and Headquarters going into billets, and "D" Company into shelters near the Quarry; while "A" Company took the place of "C" Company in the defended post in S.9.a.

After four days in Brigade support, the 2nd Battalion then relieved the 17th Royal Fusiliers in the right sub-sector of front line, "A" Company remaining in defensive post. For the last four days of April there was normal trench warfare, excepting on the 28th, when, at 6 a.m., there was an organised shoot by eight howitzers on the sugar factory at Boyelles, which overlooked the whole of the front line; but, although hits were obtained, the factory was not destroyed. On the last day of April the rain set in again, and the trenches became very wet and muddy. During this month the strength of the 2nd Battalion had been raised by new drafts to a maximum trench strength of 31 Officers and 761 other ranks, reinforcements being 18 Officers and 489 other ranks.(1)

Trench Warfare.

The 2nd Battalion remained in this sector until May 2nd, and during this tour in the trenches they worked so well in improving them as to earn the compliments of the Brig.-General on their efforts.

On relief by the 1st King's (Liverpool) Regiment, the 2nd Battalion returned to billets in Blairville, and during their four days' rest (?) they provided large working parties each night in digging communication trenches right and left of the railway line. The enemy shelled Blairville each day, and on the night of 5th May the 2nd Battalion were back in the front line, relieving the 17th Royal Fusiliers, occupying the same positions as before. The weather turned very wet—it rained all night and the trenches were in a very bad state. There was normal trench warfare, but on the 8th May the position was shelled by the Germans all the afternoon. The next three days were fine, and the front line trenches improved, although the communication trenches were still bad.

On the 11th May, Captain Tator and his Company Sergt.-Major, of the 305th Infantry, U.S.A., came to the 2nd

(1) Their casualties for the month were:—4 other ranks killed; 2 Officers and 52 other ranks wounded.

Digitized by Google

Battalion for three days' instruction in the line. They had a good taste of what to expect, for during this afternoon the Germans dropped about 400 heavy shells on the railway station at Boisleux-au-Mont and on the defended locality. During this tour in the line the German trench mortars were very active, and our own artillery retaliated; but, owing to the contour of the ground and difficulty in spotting the hostile positions, this had to be stopped, owing to shells falling short and dropping in the proximity of our own trench mortars. The Battalion was relieved by the 2nd Manchester Regiment (32nd Division) on the 12th May, and marched to Blairville, being taken thence by motor 'buses to Barly, where the 2nd Battalion formed part of the 6th Corps Reserve. They remained at Barly, undergoing progressive training and rifle practice. Unfortunately, the rifle range was some distance away from the training ground, so use had to be made of every available bank for small rifle ranges. Fortunately, the weather continued fine for the three weeks or more they were there, and on some of the afternoons sports and football was indulged in, keeping Officers and men very fit.

Training at Barly.

The maximum trench strength of the 2nd Battalion for May was 29 Officers and 700 other ranks.(1)

The glorious Summer weather was welcomed by the troops after their experience in the wet and miserable trenches—it only rained on four days during the month of May.

The Battalion remained training at Barly until 6th June, when the 6th Brigade moved into line at Monchy-au-Bois, occupying the trenches south and south-west of Monchy. Further training was carried on here until June 9th, when the 2nd Battalion relieved the 17th Royal Fusiliers in the left sector, right front, in front of Ayette, nearly midway between Arras and Albert, on the Amiens—Arras main road, "B" and "C" Companies in front line and partly in garrison in strong posts. "A" was support Company, and "D" reserve Company. In this sector it was unnecessary to use communication trenches, for the men could walk up in small parties direct to the front line—even cooking was done in front line at the Company cookhouses.

Ayette Sector.

There was normal trench warfare during this four days' tour, but at 2.40 a.m., on the 10th, Lce-Corpl. Booth, of "B" Company, captured a Bosche, and next day, 11th June, Lieut.-Colonel W. J. J. Collas, D.S.O., a Regular Officer of the Regiment (formerly commanding 3rd Corps Reinforcement Camp) took over the command of the Battalion from Lieut.-Colonel Orme.

(1) While their casualties for the month were :—
KILLED.—10 other ranks.
WOUNDED.—1 Officer and 37 other ranks.

Digitized by Google

On the 14th June, the Germans attempted a raid on "C" Company's front, on the right. This was easily repulsed, one German Officer being killed and left on our front parapet. The same night our trench mortars put down a one hour's shoot on a suspected German post. This was just before midnight, and next morning, from 4 to 6 a.m., the Germans, by way of retaliation, heavily shelled Ayette and the Battalion's support and reserve lines with guns of all calibre. The Battalion was then relieved by the 1st King's (Liverpool) Regiment, and moved back to reserve trenches; and after a few days' rest were back in the trenches again, taking over from 1st King's (Liverpool) Regiment. The sector now held by the Battalion extended from Ayette to Ablainzeville road, with the 99th Infantry Brigade on their right and 5th Brigade on the left. Trench warfare was normal, but several raids were made to endeavour to get identification of the Germans in front of the Staffords—not always successful. For the last four days of the month they were in reserve at Monchy. Sickness, owing to the state of the trenches, was higher than usual, 8 Officers and 105 other ranks being in hospital, while their casualty list for the month were 9 other ranks killed and 25 wounded.

Trench Warfare.

By the end of June the great German push had exhausted itself. They had regained a considerable amount of ground from the Allies, but had themselves sustained enormous losses. As a result of the March offensive, the conduct of the War, from the Allies' side, was placed under a single command, Marshal Foch being universally selected for the supreme command of all the Allied Forces.

Reinforcements from home had helped to make good the losses sustained by the British and bring them up to strength, while the Americans were beginning to come over in increasing numbers. The month of July was mainly used by the Allies to increase their strength and complete the training of the new troops for the great offensive designed by Marshal Foch. During this month, the battle front was silent, being broken only by local attacks of the French and British against the Germans. These were in every case successful.

The position held by the 2nd Battalion at Ayette was occasionally shelled during the month, and on the 18th/19th the support Company and Aid Post at Douchy was heavily shelled with German gas (yellow cross), causing several casualties.(1) While at Monchy, in support, the Battalion was joined, on June 28th, by "B" Company, 1st Battalion, 319th Regiment, U.S.A., who were sent to them for instruction

(1) Captain W. T. Williams, D.S.O., the Medical Officer of the Battalion, and 2nd Lieuts. Ford and Massey, with 11 other ranks, of whom 4 died as a result of being gassed.

Digitized by Google

and experience, from 28th July to August 1st, one platoon being sent to each Company, while the South Staffords' platoons displaced were sent back to Transport lines for training.(1)

The 80th received in reinforcements 3 Officers and 265 other ranks, making the maximum strength of the Battalion 26 Officers and 806 men. The 2nd Battalion remained in the Ayette sector until August 23rd, when they moved up to Railway Embankment, north-east of Courcelles, which was to be the "jumping off point for the attack on Ervillers."

The initial stages of the final advance and defeat of the enemy was begun on July 17th, when the French, under Generals Mangin and Degoutte, attacked and drove the Germans back over the Marne for the second time. By the 4th August, 1918, the Allies, attacking between Soissons and Rheims, had forced the Germans back to the line of the river Vesle, and flattened out the bulge of the German salient, which had reached Chateau Thierry, on the river Marne.

On August 17th, the 2nd Battalion relieved the 1st K.R.R.C. and 1st Royal Berks. Regiment (99th Brigade) in the front line at Ablainzeville. For the first day in these trenches everything was normal, but on the 19th things became livelier. 2nd Lieut. Armstrong was wounded while in charge of a wiring party. Lieut. Slingsby, who was in charge of a fighting patrol, made an attack on an enemy post, capturing four prisoners. Our own artillery were very active, and there was much sniping on our trenches, Captain A. Denton being wounded. Captain G. Dutton then took command of "A" Company. Lieut. Slingsby was awarded a M.C. for his action on this occasion.

Attack on Ervillers.

At 4.55 a.m., on August 21st, the 99th Infantry Brigade attacked Moyblain Trench, gaining their objective by 6.15 a.m., the 2nd South Staffords being in Corps Reserve, in the old British front line. Next day, the 3rd Division attacked and captured Courcelles. Everything was ready now for the attack on Ervillers, zero time being fixed for 11 a.m. on the morning of 23rd August. The objective of the 2nd Battalion in this attack on Ervillers was the German trench 200 yards east of the village.

"The Battalion advanced to the attack, the first two Companies—'D' Company right front Company, commanded

(1) The Battalion's casualties for the month of July were:—
KILLED (Gas).—4 other ranks.
WOUNDED.—3 Officers, 45 other ranks.
Sickness showed a distinct improvement in the health of the Battalion, only 2 Officers and 75 other ranks being sent to hospital.

Digitized by Google

by Captain West, M.C.; 'C' Company left front Company, commanded by Lieut. Wooley, M.C. These two front Companies in four lines, in two waves. The support Company, 'B,' under Captain Smalley, advanced in two lines, one wave, and the Reserve Company, 'A,' in artillery formation. After passing through our outpost line, the right Company, 'D,' saw a few groups of the enemy in full retreat. A few hostile machine guns gave a little trouble, but these were successfully dealt with, and, assisted by three light Tanks, the advance continued. Dugouts and shelters were mopped up by the Company as they advanced, and what was left was satisfactorily cleared by the support and reserve Companies following.

Capture of Ervillers.

"Some parties of the enemy willingly gave themselves up, and the posts that offered any resistance were dealt with by the bayonet, and it was necessary in some cases to bomb some of the dugouts. The Germans opened a barrage soon after ours, but owing to our quick advance we were well in front of it.

"On passing through the village, 'D' Company, as far as possible, re-organised 400 yards west of Ervillers, and was ready for further attack at 11.45 a.m.; but as our barrage was not due to lift from the village until 12.10 p.m., they utilised the interval to work round the south side of the village and captured a field gun in action. Many hostile machine guns were encountered by 'D' Company which had not been touched by our barrage or Tanks, and no less than 20 of these were rounded up and captured. This action of 'D' Company was of vital importance to the success of the advance, for these 20 machine guns would have undoubtedly held up the frontal attack on the village.

"As soon as the barrage lifted at 12.10 p.m., 'D' Company advanced and occupied the high ground south-east of the village, and touch was established with the 5th Infantry Brigade on the right, and with our own Company 'C' on the left. 'C' Company, who were left front Company, after advancing 400 yards, came under a heavy German machine gun fire. This was successfully dealt with by our Lewis gunners, and the German crews were either killed or taken prisoners (about 30).

"Advancing further, a strong point was overcome about 1,000 yards further on, and about fifty Bosche were taken prisoners.(1)

" 'C' Company was then re-organised, as far as possible, in a trench fifty yards west of the village, during which they

(1) Captain West was awarded a Bar to his M.C., while C.S.M. King (also of "D" Company) was awarded a D.C.M.

Digitized by Google

suffered a few casualties from machine gun and rifle fire—chiefly from the village.

"Directly our barrage lifted, 'C' Company entered the village and met with considerable resistance, but after a little delay the South Staffords gained a superiority of fire over the enemy, a[nd] going forward, they captured 70 prisoners, 5 machine gu[ns] heavy trench mortars and 4 light field guns.

"An outpost [was] then established about 200 yards east of the village, a[nd] which was established with the 1st King's Liverpool Regime[nt] the left, and with 'D' Company, South Staffords, on their [right].

The Battle of Albert.

"The support, 'B' [Com]pany, and reserve, 'A' Company, mopped up the villag[e] cleared strong points (machine guns), capturing a grea[t] ber of prisoners. Most of these two Companies finished the final objective and were afterwards re-organised, a[nd] 2nd Battalion was established 'in depth' before dark.

"The 1st Royal Berks. Re[gt] supported the attack of the 2nd South Staffords in gr[and] style, their Commanding Officer giving Lieut.-Colonel J. [C.] as every assistance,"(1) while the Battalion's own Machi[ne] n Section gave great help in the advance. They were a[lso] lped by the Tanks, who did some good work in the open[ing] ages of the attack, but were put "out of action" before [the] barrage lifted to allow them to enter the village. The 2nd Battalion, South Staffordshire Regiment, in this attack was commanded by Major S. Harper, M.C.

They were relieved during the night of August 24th/25th by the K.O.Y.L.I., and went into bivouac at the Aerodrome, east of Ayette, where they remained resting and re-organising until the end of August. On the 28th August, the Battalion took part in "Divisional salvage day," and were congratulated by the Divisional General Officer Commanding on the amount of salvage collected. This totalled in value £3,173 1s. 6d.

In the operations leading up to the attack on Ervillers, and in the fighting for the capture of the village, they sustained rather heavy casualties.(2) Their captures included 510 German prisoners, 9 field guns, 5 howitzers, and machine guns, light and heavy, 52.

On the 27th August, 2nd Lieut. G. W. Poole took over "B" Company, and Captain Kelsey took over command of

(1) War Diary.

(2) KILLED.—Captain H. W. S. Hatton (Adjutant), Lieut. E. W. Rawson, and 2nd Lieut. R. Shakespear and 15 other ranks.
WOUNDED.—Lieuts. Slingsby, R. W. A. Gleed and Vantier, and 2nd Lieuts. W. H. Jones and 156 other ranks; while 11 other ranks were returned as missing.

Digitized by Google

"A" Company. Captain G. Dutton was appointed Adjutant, and 2nd Lieut. H. J. Royal was appointed B.O.S.O. During the month of August the following Officers joined:—Captain L. J. Kelsey and 2nd Lieuts. R. C. Weston, H. Appleby, M.C., J. A. Lane, H. G. Bailey, E. Smart, S. H. Houle, E. T. Chapman, and W. H. Jones, Lieut. Vantier, 2nd Lieuts. Vinden, Ridout, and Wadsworth, and 200 other ranks.

The 1st September saw the final battle joined with the Germans. They had been driven back on their last stronghold—the Hindenberg line—with its second and third lines of fortified defence. The Germans hoped to make themselves secure behind these fortresses, where they could rest during the Winter and prepare for a further campaign; but the Allied armies struck so hard and so swiftly that, instead of the Germans retiring in a leisurely way, they were forced rapidly back, leaving thousands of prisoners and many hundreds of guns of all calibres.

The Allied front at the beginning of September was held as follows:—The Belgian Army, under King Albert, held the line from the sea nearly to Ypres. Next in line came the 2nd British Army, under General Plumer, who held the front from Ypres to the river Lys. Then the 5th Army, under General Birdwood, held the line in front of Lens and Lille, with the 1st Army, under General Horne, on his right, covering the front down to Arras. Immediately below Arras and in front of Cambrai was the 3rd Army, under General Byng, with the 4th Army, under General Rawlinson, prolonging the line to St. Quentin, where it linked up with the 1st French Army, under General Debeney, the remainder of the French Armies prolonging the line to the Switzerland border; while the United States Army, under General Pershing, held the line in between the Argonne and the Meuse.

Second Battle of Arras.

In this great attack on the Siegfried—Hindenburg zone, the British Army were allotted the most difficult task, for they had to attack in the area where the enemy's defences were most highly organised and his forces were strongest. The British, under Sir Douglas Haig, had borne the heaviest of the fighting all through the Summer; every Division had been sorely tried, so that in placing the heaviest task on them it only showed the honour and faith that Marshal Foch had in the fighting qualities of his British Allies—a faith which, as the course of events showed, was abundantly justified.

On September 1st, the 2nd Battalion were in Corps reserve, in Moyblain Trench, west of Courcelles, and next day they moved forward to west of Vaulx Vraucourt, relieving the 2/4th K.O.Y.L.I. (62nd Division) in the assembly area, ready for the attack and capture of the high ground west and

Digitized by Google

south-west of Morchies. For this attack, "A" and "C" Companies were in the front line, "D" Company in support, with "B" Company in reserve. Zero hour was fixed for 5.20 a.m. Our artillery put down an excellent barrage, and under it the troops moved forward. The German opposition began to show signs of weakening, and by 5.35 a.m. the objective was gained, when patrols were sent out and consolidation of the position begun. Unfortunately, Major B. C. Parr was killed by shell fire during the advance. Orders were then received for the attack to continue, and our troops pressed forward until eventually a line was established east of Hermies and Demicourt. The position won by the Battalion had now nearly brought them back within about four miles to the line from which the Germans forced us in March. A particularly fine piece of work was performed by a patrol of "C" Company, under the command of 2nd Lieut. Powell, during this advance. The Division on our right was held up, and this young officer, who was sent out to maintain touch, had to miss a whole Division front before meeting any other British troops. Eventually he connected up with the New Zealand Division. He was subsequently awarded a M.C.(1) The 2nd Battalion was relieved on the night of 4th September by the 1st Royal Berks. Regiment, and moved back to Divisional Reserve in the old German hospital east of Morchies.

Battle of Havrincourt.

The forward movement was continued on the 10th, when the Battalion moved as support Battalion to the 5th Infantry Brigade. Battalion Headquarters were slightly shelled, but no casualties, and at 2.30 p.m. "B" Company (Captain R. H. Atkinson, Lieut. R. W. A. Gleed, and 2nd Lieuts. B. J. King and J. A. Lane) moved up to Juniper Trench, and an hour later they moved to the old British line just east of Demicourt; while "D" Company (Lieut. C. R. Woolley, M.C., M.M., and 2nd Lieuts. J. Fillingham and E. C. Powell) moved up and occupied Juniper Trench. The same night, at 7.30 p.m., the 2nd Battalion moved up to front line and relieved the 1st Oxford and Bucks. Light Infantry.

The Battalion was disposed as follows:—"B" Company right front, "D" Company left front, "C" Company (2nd Lieuts. Poole, E. Wrightson, and Smart) in support, while "A" Company (Lieut. J. F. Benoy and 2nd Lieuts. S. H. Houle, E. T. Chipham, and E. J. Potter) were in reserve. No sooner was the line taken over than "mopping up" was carried on, and by 2.50 on the morning of the 13th, Hunt Avenue had been cleared of the enemy. During the night,

(1) Their casualties for the attack on Morchies were:—
KILLED.—Major B. C. Parr, Oxford Light Infantry (attached).
WOUNDED.—Captain L. J. Kelsey, M.C., and 2nd Lieut. Bailey.
OTHER RANKS.—4 killed, 44 wounded and missing; and while working in Divisional reserve 10 other ranks were wounded.

Digitized by Google

"B" and "D" Companies sent out forward patrols and established posts in Alban and Fagan Trenches, touch being established with both flank Battalions.

During their four days' tour in these trenches, there was only intermittent shelling by the Germans. As a result of patrols under Lieut. W. A. Gleed, 2nd Lieuts. E. C. Powell, J. Fillingham, and J. A. Lane, much useful information was obtained of the enemy, and during the night of September 14th "D" Company established some new forward posts in Crosse Avenue. The same night this Company was relieved by "A" Company, 1st Coldstream Guards, and moved back to the Hermies Switch, where they were joined by "C" Company.

Refitting and Training.

There was slight gas shelling of the support lines on the night of 15th/16th, when the Battalion was relieved by the 1st Royal Scots Fusiliers, and the Battalion went into Divisional reserve, in the old German hospital, Morchies, moving next day to west of Ervillers, where they went into rest billets until the 26th of the month, refitting and training for a fresh attack. By this date the Allied Armies were now close up against the last German defences. The 3rd Army, under General Byng, was operating in close touch with the 4th Army, under General Rawlinson, on the right, from the 13th to 19th. Both Generals Byng and Rawlinson had struck on a thirteen mile front, and made an advance of over two miles, repulsing several counter-attacks. There was a slight lull from the 19th to the 24th, but on the latter date the 4th Army pushed forward towards St. Quentin, and took Selency, while at the same time the 3rd Army, under General Byng, advanced towards Cambrai.

On the 26th, the 2nd Battalion proceeded to the Doignes area, preparatory to the attack. The Officers with the Battalion now were:—Lieut.-Colonel J. J. Collas, D.S.O. (Commanding), Lieut. J. F. Benoy (Adjutant), Lieut. I. Burns (M.O.),[1] 2nd Lieut. B. T. C. Benoy (Sigrs.), 2nd Lieut. H. R. Wallis (T.O.). "A" Company: Lieut. R. Baxter, M.C., 2nd Lieuts. E. J. Potter, H. Appleby, M.C., and E. T. Chipham. "B" Company: Captain R. H. Atkinson, Lieut. R. A. Kendal, and 2nd Lieuts. B. J. King and J. P. B. Winkler. "C" Company: Lieut. C. R. Woolley, M.C., M.M., and 2nd Lieuts. E. Wrightson, C. H. Ricketts, and B. J. Smith. "D" Company: Captain J. West, M.C., Lieut. E. H. Slingsby, and 2nd Lieuts. J. Fillingham and T. Purcell. 2nd Lieut. S. H. Houle was Brigade Liason Officer.

All night long the guns continued to pour a constant stream of shells on the doomed enemy trenches. Such a terrible bombardment had never been equalled before. So severely

(1) An American doctor.

Digitized by Google

was the enemy punished that his ration parties were unable to reach his front lines. Hidden in deep dugouts, the Bosche uncertainly awaited what was in store for him.

From the trenches at Doignes, the 2nd South Staffords moved up to the forming-up positions south-east of Flesquiéres, *via* Lock 7 on the Canal du Nord; on their left were the 1st King's (Liverpool) Regiment. At 11.40 a.m., the 2nd South Staffords and the 1st King's were ordered to move just north of the Beetroot Factory (east of Flesquiéres). While this move was in progress, they came under heavy machine gun fire from Orival Wood, which was still held by the Germans, and were forced to shelter in trenches north of Flesquiéres until an attack could be organised. At 3.30 p.m., the 2nd Battalion, in conjunction with the 1st King's, attacked Orival Wood, which was captured about 5.30 p.m. Afterwards, the attack was pressed forward on the Graincourt line, the objectives being Lathe Trench, Cantaing Trench and Cantaing support. Strong opposition was met with from the German machine gunners, but they gained Lathe Trench, and a line was established.

During these operations, Lieut. E. H. Slingsby, of "D" Company, was captured by the enemy, but, although wounded, he very pluckily succeeded in making his escape. Officers' patrols were sent out directly the line was established, and gained touch with the 62nd Division on the South Staffords' right and the 1st King's (Liverpool) Regiment on their left.(1) **Capture of Orival Wood.**

In addition to gaining their objective, the 2nd Battalion captured two machine guns and several prisoners, including a German Regimental Commander, who was most indignant at being taken down by a South Stafford private. He demanded an Officer's escort!

Next morning (28th September), at 5.15 a.m., the attack on the trenches not yet taken was renewed. Crossing over the Canal du Nord, the 2nd Battalion were the attacking Battalion. On their right was the 99th Brigade, and on their left the 1st King's (Liverpool) Regiment, with the 17th Royal Fusiliers in support. Under cover of a creeping artillery barrage, moving forward at the rate of 100 yards in five minutes, "B" and "D" Companies formed the first wave of the attack, with "C" Company in support and "A" Company in reserve. The attack proceeded very successfully as far as the embankment of the railway line, Cambrai—Bapaume, just west of the Canal du Nord. After reaching the railway embankment, the German machine gun fire became so intense

(1) In the severe fighting for this trench, Lieut. E. H. Slingsby and 2nd Lieuts. B. J. King, J. P. B. Winkler, B. J. Smith, and J. Fillingham were wounded, and approximately 100 other ranks were killed, wounded, and missing.

Digitized by Google

that the South Staffords were prevented from crossing the Canal, and a line was established along the railway embankment. In this successful attack on this portion of the Siegfried line, the 2nd Battalion captured one 8in. howitzer, one 4.2in. howitzer, and four 77 m. In addition, a great number of machine guns and trench mortars were also captured; and German prisoners captured by the South Staffords were about 300. These were mostly men of the German Naval Division.

After establishing the forward line, it was taken over by the 17th Royal Fusiliers, and the 2nd South Staffords took their place in support.(1)

For two days the Battalion remained in support, but on the 29th "A" and "B" Companies moved forward and occupied Marcoing support trench, 400 yards east of the Canal, while "C" and "D" Companies remained in position in railway embankment. The Germans continually shelled all the Staffords' positions, causing casualties of 30 other ranks.

From September 30th to October 2nd the Battalion remained north-east of Noyelles, re-organising Companies and refitting.(2)

Trench Warfare.

On October 3rd, the 2nd Battalion relieved the 1st Highland Light Infantry in the front line. "A" and "B" Companies were in front line, with "C" and "D" Companies in close support. The front line occupied by the Battalion consisted of a series of posts running north to south, where, on their right, a combined post was established with the 1st King's (Liverpool) Regiment. On the way up, 2nd Lieut. E. T. Chipham was wounded.

The position occupied was just south of Cambrai, and the work of the Battalion consisted of establishing posts in the existing line and patrolling the front. The situation was fairly quiet, but there was occasional shelling by the enemy each day while in this sector. On October 7th, the following Officers joined the Battalion:—Lieut. G. W. Brown, 2nd Lieuts. C. S. Bradbury, G. B. Hall, and E. F. Green. This day the enemy sent over a few gas shells, and 2nd Lieut. R. H. Ricketts was sent to the Field Ambulance, suffering from gas poisoning.

---

(1) Their casualties were:—Lieut. C. R. Woolley, M.C., M.M., wounded, and approximately 170 other ranks killed, wounded, and missing.

(2) During the month of September, during these operations for the capture of Cambrai, that is, from September 26th to 30th, the Battalion suffered the following casualties:—

KILLED.—1 Officer and 32 other ranks.

WOUNDED.—10 Officers and 260 other ranks, with 31 other ranks missing.

Digitized by Google

Next day, the 8th October, the great movement began for the capture of Cambrai, and both the 3rd and 4th Armies attacked on a seventeen mile front.

The outposts of the 2nd Battalion were withdrawn to a position just in rear of the original line, to enable the barrage line to be put down for the attack by the 99th Brigade and the 63rd Division. Next day, the 2nd Battalion were withdrawn to Lock 7 area, west of Flesquiéres. During the period October 1st to 9th, it was evident the Germans contemplated retiring from Cambrai, which was in danger of attack from both north and south; and the Bosche, true to his traditions, set fire to various parts of the town, for several large fires were observed.

The time in rest billets was devoted to cleaning up the area, and salvaging, and on the 13th the Battalion moved up to Niergnies, on the eastern side of Cambrai, which had now been captured by the Canadian Corps attacking from the north. The Battalion was billetted in houses in Niergnies, which just previously had been occupied by the Germans. The Bosche had left these billets in a filthy condition, and there was needed cleaning to be done before they were fit for our men to use. "The mark of the Beast" was everywhere. They discovered three of our Tanks (converted by the Germans for their own use) lying derelict in the village. These had been previously knocked out by our gunners firing Bosche anti-Tank guns.

Billets in Niergnies.

The Battalion remained here training, and collecting large quantities of valuable salvage, until the 22nd, when a move forward was made to St. Hilairs. The forward movement of the 3rd and 4th Armies continued. The 4th Army by this time had reached Le Cateau (the scene of the thrilling stand by the 2nd Army Corps, under General Smith-Dorrien, in 1914), while the 3rd Army were well in sight of Le Quesnoy.

The Officers with the 2nd Battalion at this date were:—Major S. Harper, M.C. (Commanding), Lieut. J. F. Benoy (Adjutant), 2nd Lieut. B. T. C. Bona (Sigrs.), 2nd Lieut. H. R. Wallis (I.O.), and Lieut. I. Burns (M.O.). "A" Company: Captain G. Dutton, 2nd Lieuts. C. S. Bradbury and A. Wadsworth. "B" Company: Lieut. G. W. Brown, and 2nd Lieuts. E. S. Vinden and H. Johnson. "C" Company: 2nd Lieuts. E. Wrightson, G. J. Ridout, and H. S. Williams. "D" Company: Lieut. R. W. A. Gleed, M.C., and 2nd Lieuts. E. F. Green and T. Purcell.

The move up had been made *via* St. Python and Escarmain, and on the 28th October they had moved up to Romeries, on the main road Le Quesnoy—Maubeuge. Next day, they relieved the 1st Scots Fusiliers in the forward battle positions

Digitized by Google

—"A" and "B" Companies north-east of Ruesnes, with "C" and "D" Companies in the ravine near the railway. The 2nd Battalion was in support, and the village was occasionally shelled by the Germans with 77 m.m.'s and gas. During this advance, large numbers of civilians were released, and were attended to by the Medical Officer (Lieut. I. Burns). The Bosche had been forced to retreat in such a hurry, owing to the ceaseless pressure of the Allies, that the Battalion found the villages they passed through almost free from injury, and the billets used by the troops were very good.(1)

The End in Sight.

When the 1st day of November dawned, it was plain the Allies had at long last broken the might of Germany. Driven back and harassed at all points by the remorseless energy of the Allies, the German Commanders had shot their last bolt. Many things had happened to hasten this collapse. Austria, by the end of October, was suing for an Armistice, and there was an end of her as a potential enemy—this being largely the result of the remarkable successes of the British Divisions operating with the Italians at the Battle of the Piave.

"For three months the British Armies had been locked in a continuous battle; for nearly ten months they had been in the forefront of the struggle. From 21st March to 27th October no United Kingdom Division had been on an average more than 69 days out of the line, while the Australian average was 79 days, and the Canadian 102 days. During the same period the percentage of casualties to strength in the British Divisions was 118 for Officers and 121 for men. The strain had been colossal, but the reward was very near; and however great the weariness of the Allied troops, it was a small thing compared to the exhaustion of the enemy."(2)

By the end of October, the Belgians and French, in the north, had pushed past Bruges, penning in the Germans against the Dutch frontier. General Plumer's Army was already knocking at the gates of Ghent. Lille had been evacuated and Courtrai occupied, while, farther south, the 5th, 3rd, and 4th Armies had advanced their line in front of Valenciennes and the Forest of Mormal. Still further south, the British, French, and American Forces had driven the enemy back almost to the French frontier—in some places beyond.

Such was the stage set for the final advance of the Allies and the complete overthrow of Germany.

---

(1) The casualty list of the Battalion for the month of October:—Killed, 8 other ranks. 1 Officer and 1 other ranks died. Wounded, 2 Officers and 47 other ranks, with 1 other ranks missing. 6 Officers were transferred to other Regiments, and the maximum trench strength of the Battalion was 17 Officers and 614 other ranks.

(2) Buchan, History of the War. Vol. XXIV.

Digitized by Google

The 2nd South Staffords were still in support at Ruesnes on November 1st, and the village was subjected to considerable shelling by the Germans, who fired both 77 m.m.'s and 4.2 guns on their position. On relief by the 2/3rd and 2/5th K.O.Y.L.I. (62nd Division), on the night of November 2nd, the Battalion moved down to Solesmes, in front of the Forest of Mormal, remaining here until 4th November, when they moved north to Escarmain, and on arrival were warned to leave at one hour's notice to move forward. This order was cancelled at 3 p.m., and the Battalion remained here until the 7th. The weather was very stormy and wet these last four days. At 10.30 a.m., the Battalion moved to Mortry Farm, and from thence further north to Villers Pol. Moving to Amfroipret on the 10th, just north of the Forest of Mormal, they were once again on the historic ground over which the 2nd Battalion had retreated in 1914; few of the original 80th were with them. While here, they were engaged on repairs to the roads in the vicinity of the village.

Back to Mons Again.

This day practically marked the close of the War, for the Allied advance had progressed to such an extent that nothing less than inevitable surrender seemed possible for the German troops. The Germans had begged for an Armistice on November 8th, but, beaten though they were—and knew it—when the Allied terms were handed to the German delegates, they professed themselves astounded by the severity of the terms and tried to wriggle out of acceptance. But Marshal Foch, who knew the people he had to deal with, was adamant, and gave them until 11 o'clock on November 11th to accept the Allied terms, or continue fighting.

Most of the British troops were so keen on getting forward, so that they could finish where the War had begun, and there was keen rivalry. Le Cateau, Landrecies, and Bavai had all been occupied by the British by November 7th, and by November 10th the British troops were back in Mons, from which they had retired in August, 1914.

The morning of November 11th was wet, cold, and foggy, and at 8.33 a.m. the 2nd Battalion received a wire from the 6th Infantry Brigade Headquarters, as follows:—"Hostilities will cease at 11.00 hours to-day 11th Nov. A.A.A. Troops will stand fast on line reached at that hour which will be reported by wire to Corps Headquarters. A.A.A. Defensive precautions will be maintained. A.A.A. There is to be no intercourse of any description with the enemy. A.A.A. No Germans are to be allowed to enter our lines, any doing so will be taken prisoners. A.A.A."(1)

(1) War Diary.

Digitized by Google

The weather, fortunately, had turned out fine, and on receipt of this wire the Battalion drums and fifes turned out and played "The Marseillaise."

The Great Moment.

The great day had come at last, and the war-worn troops could await the final hour with thankfulness and pride. The time passed slowly, for fighting was continued in a spasmodic fashion on most parts of the front. "Officers had their watches in their hands, and the troops waited with the same grave composure with which they had fought." Suddenly, on the stroke of eleven, there was a second of tense silence, then from one end of the long Allied line to the other, from the Vosges to the North Sea, there rolled a wave of cheering. Peace had come at last!

SPECIAL ORDER OF THE DAY

BY

GENERAL HON. SIR J. H. G. BYNG, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., M.V.O.

COMMANDING THIRD ARMY.

To all ranks of the Third Army.

11/11/18.

The operations of the last three months have forced the enemy to sue for an Armistice as a prelude to peace.

Your share in the consummation of this achievement is one that fills me with pride and admiration.

Since August 21st you have won eighteen decisive battles. You have driven the enemy back over sixty miles of country, and you have captured 67,000 prisoners and 800 guns.

That is your record, gained by your ceaseless enterprise, your indomitable courage, and your loyal support to your leaders.

Eleven Divisions in the four Corps (Guards, 2nd, 3rd, and 62nd; 5th, 37th, 42nd and New Zealand, 17th, 21st and 38th) have been continuously in action since the beginning of the advance and have borne the brunt of the operations. Other Divisions have joined and left, each one adding fresh lustre to its history.

To all ranks, to all Corps and formations, to all administrative and transport units, I tender my thanks. May your pride in your achievement be as great as mine is in the recollection of having commanded the Army in which you served.

J. BYNG, General,
Commanding Third Army.

Digitized by Google

In the village of Amfroipret, where the 2nd Battalion were located, there was a great display of flags by the local inhabitants—flags which must have been carefully hidden for nearly four long and weary years, until the Allied Forces brought the people freedom again.

The 2nd Battalion was selected, with other Regiments, to form part of the Army of Occupation in Germany, and parades in various fittings of equipment were organised to decide the best order of dress for the march into Germany.

The Battalion was inspected by the General Officer Commanding 6th Infantry Brigade on the 17th, and next day, at 8.55 a.m. on the morning of the 18th, the march to Germany was commenced.

THE MARCH TO THE RHINE.

"At 08.55 hours on November 18th, headed by the drums, the Battalion left Amfroipret's one long, narrow street to the tune of 'When we wind up the Watch on the Rhine,' happy and excited.(1)

The March into Germany.

"*The march to Germany had commenced.*

"At the cross-roads north of Bermeries, we fell into our place in the column in rear of the 10th D.C.L.I., who had been billeted in that village. Everyone seemed to be on the move—horse, foot and dragoons. The roads were one long crush of traffic of every description; why no accidents occurred was a miracle. Regiments of cavalry trotting along the semi-frozen road, column after column of lorries, proudly displaying the 'Bulldog'(2) sign of our Army, long lines of guns, with the usual conglomeration of gramophones, tables, armchairs, etc., fastened to their wagons—everyone seemed to be coming with us to the 'Promised Land.' Maubeuge was our first destination—Maubeuge that had held out so gallantly four years ago; and when we got there we found that it was practically everybody else's destination, too, judging by the keenness with which our billets were filched from our exasperated Billeting Officer by a Brigade of Army Artillery.

"Through Baval we passed, now quite well known to us by our prolonged stay in the neighbourhood, skirting the town and along the straight, poplar-guarded road to Longueville, decked with the usual tricolours and shakily scrawled '*Vivent les Alliés*. Past emaciated prisoners, hastily released by the retreating Germans, tramping wearily but so cheerfully to

(1) Communicated by Captain J. F. Benoy.
(2) Corps sign of the 6th Corps.

Digitized by Google

meet their old regiments; past groups of thankful French peasants, waving their handkerchiefs in utter ignorance of Thomas Atkins' catcalls and warcrys; past streams of refugees riding in every imaginable kind of conveyance, drawn by every species of beast of burden, horses and donkeys, bullocks and mules, cows and dogs, all their worldly goods piled dizzily above, smiling faintly at Tommy's gleeful applause—on into the little grey-walled, old-world fortress town, which the Guards had captured some few days before. Great enthusiasm was displayed as 'Come, Lassies and Lads' re-echoed through the narrow cobbled streets, and the admiring crowd showed great signs of accompanying the Battalion into the old barracks where we were to be billetted to the indignation of the Commanding Officer and the helpless terror of the Company Commanders. Accommodation was not too plentiful, and most of the Officers had to crowd into quite small barrack rooms. But our Quartermaster was equal to the occasion, and after settling the Battalion in, proceeded to enchant all the good ladies living just outside the barracks, thus procuring a number of most comfortable billets for us. Undaunted by the march, the drums sounded Retreat, to the immense pleasure of a big civilian audience which must have numbered several hundreds. "C" Company distinguished itself by setting fire to the roof of the barracks. However, the matter was soon put right, and we all retired to a well-deserved rest.

Longueville.

"Apparently, the railways could not advance as quickly as the Infantry, and we spent the 19th of November in Maubeuge as well, the troops revelling in the unaccustomed pleasure of being able to wander through streets and gaze into shop windows. Some of the Officers also took the opportunity of oiling up their rusty French. The next morning we said good-bye to the old-fashioned town, though our departure was hardly a triumph, for, owing to a mistake with the map, we were twenty minutes late at the Brigade starting point. Luckily, others besides ourselves were deceived, and the incident passed off without much ado.

"Through Vieux-Reng wound our way and across the French frontier to Haulchin, where first the 80th came into action in August, 1914—hallowed ground for us, their descendants of 1918.

Haulchin.

"They made us very comfortable, the people of Haulchin, though the village did not boast of many large farms. Companies were rather strung out, and at least one Company Commander began to experience difficulties in making known his wants, in spite of his linguistic talents. A spell of cold weather continued, and we all felt the lack of fuel, though rumour has it that, in the Quartermaster's billet, so great a

Digitized by Google

fancy was taken to this gallant Officer by *les braves Belges*, that fires approaching those of blast furnaces went on night and day. The Commanding Officer investigated the matter, and reported some truth in it. Haulchin was our home until November 24th, but when we passed the red-roofed Church at Estinne au Mont on that day no one seemed very sorry. There was not very much for the men to do in the evenings, and a real hunger for civilisation had seized them. Besides, we all wanted to see the Rhine—the German Rhine.

"Anderlues was our billet on the night of the 24th We arrived too soon for our billetting party, who had been refreshing themselves in the neighbourhood in cafés after their arduous labours, and the Massed Drummers sounded for 'Quartermaster-Sergeants' twice before the Battalion was able to move off to its temporary quarters. On the march to Anderlues, Thomas Atkins gave us an example of his very best self. We were enjoying a ten minutes' halt about two miles from the village, in between two very steep hills. As we sat there comfortably smoking, an unfortunate Belgian had just driven his wife and children and all his chattels down the hill in a lumbering country cart, drawn by a half-starved cow. The uphill journey was beyond the poor brute's strength. It could not budge, but, with a whoop of delight, a wave of khaki engulfed the clumsy wagon—willing hands were at the shafts, on the wheels and at the back in dozens deep. Up the hill soared the amazed proprietor of the vehicle. Up the hill shot the astonished cow. To a chorus of delighted 'Eaves' the wagon disappeared, and the next minute they were racing one another down the hill again as the warning whistle sounded for 'Get dressed.'

How "Tommy Atkins" Helped.

"From Anderlues the trams run to Charleroi, the Belgian Birmingham. And that night a message arrived from our Intelligence Sergeant, who was ahead looking after our welfare, to the Adjutant that our billets had been 'pinched.' So the 25th beheld us marching at the head of the Brigade Column into the Belgian Black Country. Soon we had left the rolling countryside and were marching among an increasing jumble of mines, factories and furnaces, hedged by endless rows of dull little cottages. The jangling, ringing, fussy tramcars, too, had a bad effect on the Regiment's chargers, and some of our mounted Officers began to look far from comfortable and happy. Crowds of people thronged to see us, and the streets were gaily decorated to greet us. Placards, that would have been very amusing had it not been for the undercurrent of pathos, were displayed in most shop windows, and the men were elated to find them written in English. They guffawed over 'Welcome to our brave heroes and deliverers,' but the men were not quite so certain of

Charleroi.

Digitized by Google

'Welcome, Tommy. We never doubted to see you back again,' for there were men with us who had known the four long years of bitterness of war and they *had* come back.

"The Billeting Officer met us with tears in his eyes. Some 'Gunner Push' had snaffled our billets. But—and he brightened—he had excellent billets for us at one end of the town known as Couillet and the 'poshest' of 'posh' billets for the Commanding Officer. So thither we made our way, to find he was right. Nowhere on the march did the troops enjoy themselves so much as at that suburb of Charleroi. Never were we better received. Never were we more comfortably housed. The Drums paraded for Guard-mounting and Retreat, blissfully conscious of an enormous audience, who nearly murdered the Adjutant because the performance did not last for hours. The next day was heralded for Orderly Room (situated in an empty shop, through the glass of which people watched the day's work going on from morn till eve with the greatest zest) being besieged by a furious Belgian. His sister had eight soldiers billetted on her, whereas he only had two! The good people of the colliery lent us their baths, and the troops revelled in gallons of hot water. In the evening a concert took place, where Belgium vied with Great Britain to a packed audience of troops and civilians. The troops were able to shop—it is to be regretted at the most exorbitant prices—to their heart's content.

Billets at Couillet.

"The 27th of November was made a special day. A photographer arrived in the morning, and successful groups of the Officers, the N.C.O.'s, and the Mons Men were taken, followed by 'equestrian portraits' of the Commanding Officer, the Adjutant, and Quartermaster. The last-named must have issued his in intense secrecy as we have not yet seen a copy. That night was celebrated by a dance, attended by (apparently) most of the population of the town, male and female, and the whole Regiment. In the middle the Adjutant was called away. We gathered afterwards he had been summoned by the local doctor, who wanted the former to sell him one of the transport horses. The other piece of good news that he brought us was that the time of march had been altered to half an hour later.

"The 28th beheld us sorrowfully marching forth to the wail of our flutes and the laments of the population. Quite a number of us left our hearts in Couillet. There was some story about the 'Quarter bloke' being one, but he had a liver over some S.A.A. boxes in a limbered wagon, so we didn't ask him. We scored a good mark at Couillet from Brigade. Everyone, owing to the half-hour alteration, had forgotten the effect of the customary 'Ten minutes halt.' The 80th

Digitized by Google

was the only unit that had remembered. Consequently, everyone was late, even the Brigadier.

"We passed through the dusty, black area of factories and tall chimney stacks south of the Cambre Canal, through crimson-roofed Presle, and past the stuccoed chateaux of prosperous citizens from Charleroi, to our destination at Fosse. Here we were barely received at all—in fact, it seemed that the population preferred the Germans to ourselves. We were more than ever assured of it when that, in the Brigadier's billet, Brigade Headquarters had been refused any fire for cooking purposes. Battalion Headquarters seemed fairly comfortable in the 'commodious residence' of an absent Belgian nobleman, but the rest of the billets were poor. Still, it was only for a night, so who worried? **Fosse.**

"Our next stop, Namur, offered us better prospects. On the 29th, we thankfully left the whitewashed houses of Fosse, and, the whole Battalion having serenaded the Quartermaster to a song of their own, entitled 'Rum! Rum!' which accused the aforesaid Officer of watering it, poisoning it in petrol tins, and hiding it in his store, we marched off very happily. **Namur.** At Six Bras (so called because it was the junction of five roads) we came upon the most patent evidence of the German *débacle* that we had yet seen—some four hundred guns drawn up in a field, most of them minus their breech-blocks and sights. We learned later that the Hun had not the horses to move them.

"On we marched in the brilliant Winter sunshine of a brisk, cold day, through the most perfect surroundings—rolling green downs, fringed with dark pine woods, and dotted with ornate red brick and cream plastered chateaux, reminding one of the red and white stone bricks of one's infancy; while down in the valley the Meuse stretched like a silver, glistening snake as far as the eye could see. Wepion was our destination, a couple of miles out of Namur—the resort of wealthy citizens of that city, who built bungalows and chateaux there on the banks of the Meuse for quiet and peace after the work of the day. We passed Fort St. Herbert, surrounded by barbed wire entanglements, and so down the steep climb to the village.

"If the first prize goes to Couillet, then Wepion gets the second for comfort. The troops were all housed in bungalows **Wepion.** and big houses down on the banks of the river, whilst Battalion Headquarters occupied a big red-bricked chateau on the slope, formerly the Headquarters of a German Landsturm Regiment. The first thing that struck us was that had the Germans held the wooded heights on the opposite

Digitized by Google

bank of the Meuse, it would have been, as our American doctor said, 'some job to shift them'! The afternoon of November 30th was enlivened by the Canadians and the Belgian loyalists, who raided certain hotels which had been German property during the War. This pastime increased as fresh suspects were pointed out, and a sudden call was made on the Battalion, which despatched 200 men on the trams to keep the crowd in order.

"December 1st and 2nd were starvation days. The transport was unable to compete with the ever-increasing lines of communication, for the Railway Troops had not yet been able to bridge the devastated area in rear of the Army. We lived on bully beef and biscuit, and went mail-less to bed. December 3rd still saw us halted on the river banks while the transport and railway people made superhuman endeavours to cross the gulf to us. On this date we despatched a Colour party to bring out the Colours to accompany the Regiment on this historic occasion, and, we hoped, the Band also.(1) King Albert, too, visited his City of Namur for the first time since 1914. Standing erect in a car, surrounded by civil functionaries, quaintly garbed in dress suits and top hats, and unguarded by police or soldiers, he was accorded a tremendous welcome by the entire population. *'Il est vrai roi de son peuple,'* said an old Belgian, with tears in his eyes, and everyone who witnessed the scene could have had no doubt on the point.

Namur.

"December 4th saw the Battalion marching across the bridge of boats over the placid Meuse, and along the river bank to Sclayn, when we crossed the water once again over to Vezin, and up to our halting place for the night. On this occasion the Battalion lost itself, having marched completely off the map issued, to the consternation of the Intelligence Officer and the Adjutant. However, we arrived at the village of Ville-en-Waret and settled in. No one was very comfortable, the village being minute. The Commanding Officer lived with a builder, the Adjutant dumped himself on the Curé, who spent two hours showing him how the Germans had blown up his safe to get at his savings, and the Quartermaster got a feather bed in a low estaminet. Unfortunately, too, we got caught in a rain shower before we got into billets, and the roads in that extremely hilly district made the Transport's task no light one. We were not sorry to get on the map again next day.

---

(1) The Colour party consisted of 2nd Lieuts. S. H. Houle and H. R. Wallis, C.S.M. O. M. King, D.C.M., and Sergeants J. H. Smith, M.M., and H. Hambleton, M.M.

Digitized by Google

"The road selected for our march to join the rest of the Brigade, on the 5th, was so steep that two platoons had to be told off to hang on to ropes, attached to the limbers and vehicles, to help the brakes stand the strain. Having passed through Vezin and Sclayn once again, we followed the south bank of the Meuse through Andenne and a picturesque little village called Ben Ahin to Huy, our halting place for December 5th. Huy is a very pretty little town astride of the Meuse, and most of the inhabitants turned out to welcome us in. We were very comfortably billetted on the north side of the river. Battalion Headquarter Mess was situated in a shop managed by a very capable and extremely pretty girl, with whom the Padre fell completely in love. **Huy.**

"The Second-in-Command (Major S. Harper), who was very fond of children, went and bought some chocolates at the Canteen (none could be procured in the town) for the small girl at the Headquarters Billet. This child was told to kiss the big Englishman in return for this unexpected present. After this, the Company Officer suggested that the little Englishman should kiss the big Belgian girl, and the Adjutant (Lieut. J. F. Benoy), who always set an example of prompt obedience, complied, to everyone's delight, including *la belle Belge*.

"Huy was the last town of any size we visited on the march, for then we struck across that sparsely populated region of Belgium known as Marche, an area of tiny villages dotted amongst hills and valleys, stretching to the German frontier. The morning of the 6th saw the marching columns of the 80th regretfully calling 'Good-byees' to Huy, in accompaniment to the Drums. We left the pleasant banks of the Meuse and marched through Stree and Warzet to Ouffet, an extraordinary English-looking village, complete with village green, on which the transport disported themselves.

"On the 7th, we advanced through the most wonderfully wooded hills, along the picturesque river Ourthe by Comblain Fairon and Comblain au Pont, to the wee hamlet of Florze. Here all Headquarters lived in the most wonderful old, white-façaded chateau, every room of which was panelled in oak. On December 8th, we marched through thick forest past Bellevaux to La Reid. Here, for the first time, reinforcements and the lucky ones from leave caught us up, including the Second-in-Command.[1] The villagers were very glad to see us—the retreating Hun, with laurel-decked rifles, lances, and guns, had not treated them well. What amused us most **Florze.**

(1) Lieut. J. P. Lloyd and 2nd Lieuts. G. P. W. Legg, C. Parry-Jones, and B. C. Grant. 2nd Lieut. E. Smart rejoined from hospital the same day.

Digitized by Google

of all was that he claimed that we had not defeated him. The Battalion's boots were beginning to feel the march, and, during the last two or three marches, we had been obliged to transport quite a number of bootless men in two lorries which had been loaned us by Division for this purpose. At La Reid our very capable Shoemaker-Sergeant took the matter in hand, and all the day and all the night he and his satellites toiled.(1) The next day beheld the whole Battalion all once more upon their feet. He and his staff had not slept a wink until the last pair was finished.

Spa.

"From La Reid we marched to our last halting place in Belgium—Francorchamps, on the frontier—which we reached in a pouring shower of rain. Our route lay through the now historic town of Spa, very like Harrogate with its numerous hotels and well-laid-out gardens. The little town gave us a most enthusiastic reception, to our great amusement and the obvious chagrin of the German Officers and soldiers, of whom there were a large number, apparently belonging to the Peace Conference. We marched past our Divisional Commander here, General Pereira, who complimented the Commanding Officer on our appearance and our march discipline.

"Spa attracted us considerably, and we would have liked to halt there for the night, but no troops were halting there. Just outside the country becomes very hilly, and the climbs, combined with frequent showers of rain, did not add to the easy going. Many wagons and limbers, belonging to other units, were stuck on the steep inclines and passed by the Battalion on the way. It says much for our own transport that nothing of this kind happens to the 80th.

Across the German Frontier.

"We arrived at Francorchamps in drenching torrents of rain, rather miserable and very muddy. This depression was only momentary. Directly after falling out in billets, there was a general race of Officers and men to see who could first cross the line past the red, white and black posts which proclaimed the boundary of Germany, and so boast proudly that he was the first of the 80th to set foot on Hunnish soil. There were so many claimants that we never found out who did. We halted for a day at Francorchamps—a last rest before reaching our final stations in the Rhineland, and on December 11th the 80th marched across the Belgian frontier into Germany.

"A good many of us were rather distressed not to discover at once large, beer-swilling, sausage-masticating Huns, and not a few were heard to complain that they saw 'no blooming difference' from the country we had just triumphantly left

(1) Sergt. Chandler was awarded a Meritorious Service Medal for his excellent work.

Digitized by Google

behind us. The greatest regret that we had was that the Colours had not yet arrived, and could not be borne uncased at the head of the Regiment on this never-to-be-forgotten occasion. Our route lay through the little frontier town of Malmedy, where the streets were so narrow that only one G.S. wagon had room in the road. What would have happened if we had met any vehicles no one liked to think. The river Roer, which flows through this quaint little place, was full of artillery wagons and limbers. Apparently the 'victorious Hun' troops in front of us had got 'fed up' with pulling them about, and thrown them into the water.

"We passed the marshy district round Sourbrodt, typically German, with neat, precise black and white farmsteads, and crowds of little 'square-headed' Rhinelander children, each one of whom was wearing a German soldier's soft cap with various coloured bands, and on to Elsenborn Lager, a sort of Aldershot training centre for German troops, with rows of concrete and wooden huts in which we were to spend the night. As usual, we reached Elsenborn Lager in the pouring rain and did not think very much of it. The most noticeable thing on the march during these opening days through Germany was the entire absence of 'grown-ups'; no one came out to see us in all our glory—except the children. Our American doctor 'guessed' that they were ashamed of themselves. In the huts which we occupied, so rumour had it, the German Artillery Regiment which had halted two days before there, grew tired of their Commanding Officer and murdered him! Our men were here paid out for the first time in German marks, great amusement being caused by the amount they received owing to the rate of exchange.

Elsenborn Lager.

"On the 12th December, the Brigade marched off through Kalter Herburg and Montjoie, nestling prettily among the woods on the river Roer, to the Ingenbroich area. Hills again were very steep and the rain did not quite keep off all the time, but the men extracted much amusement from the great cumbersome country carts, drawn by big, patient white and fawn-coloured oxen. Our billets were in the village of Konzen, a spot painfully reminiscent of the toy villages of our youthful days, with fuzzy green trees and stolid black and white Frisian cows. In Konzen we were very well treated by the people, who would not hear of the men sleeping on the floor. Most of the houses possessed photos of Fritz or Hans in his uniform, to the disgust of the South Staffordshires, who made rather deprecating remarks on the value of the German Army. 'Only two more marches!' we said to ourselves, as we fell in under the streaming rain in the deserted roads of the village on December 13th. Most of us will agree that this was the worst day's march of all.

Konzen.

Digitized by Google

"From the moment we started until we arrived at Nideggan, on the summit of a sheer 1,800 foot climb, it rained without ceasing. We had to dispense with music that day, and pack all the drums to save their 'heads.' By the time we reached Schnidt, hidden in its pine woods, we were all wet through to the skin, but our cheerfulness never deserted us. Till we marched into the valley, where meanders a little tributary of the Roer, and then, towering above us on a perfect precipice, Nideggan looked down upon us through the rain mists. From Konzen to a cluster of houses at the foot of the precipice called Hetzlngen we had sung lightheartedly under the constant downpour,—but here of a sudden our songsters broke off abruptly. Surely this was no joke to play at the end of a fair day's march! We didn't *feel* like acrobats, nor had we enjoyed the campaign in Italy like our comrades in the 38th. This hill is so steep that the only way to climb is to run the road in layers, so to speak, the net result being an addition of about two and half miles to the journey. With blank faces and sodden feelings we commenced the climb. But Thomas soon forgot his grouse. In a very short time the whole Brigade was moving on these various layers of roads, so close to one another that one could, from the Headquarter Company leading the Battalion, throw a stone into the Quartermaster's precious limbers in the very rear of the column. This amused the men considerably, and the leading Company, 'B,' banded jokes with the rearmost Company, 'D,' all the way up. On the very top of the hill, silhouetted against the grey December afternoon, the Brigadier watched us ascend. 'My Gawd!' said a signaller, ''ow did 'e get up? Flew I 'spect,' but he went on his 'flat feet' just the same as we!

The Climb to Nideggan.

"To the minds of many, the test of that hill was supreme as to our marching powers—for days we had been incessantly marching; that very day we had come 13 miles to the valley below the village—and when we marched through the water-soaked streets of Nideggan it was without the loss of a single man—not one had fallen out. Our troubles, alas! did not end there. No room could be found for 'D' Company, who had to move off at once to Boich, a village nearly two miles away. Billets in Nideggan were very good—Battalion Headquarters and two Companies were each in an hotel. The village is a famous resort for jaded Germans during the Summer months. 'C' Company slept in two palatial mansions. They were always the luckiest! Nideggan is one of the most beautiful spots in the whole Rhineland, and we always regret that we never saw it under happier conditions than through the driving December rain at the end of a day's march.

Digitized by Google

"December the 14th was the final day, for the 6th Brigade Group, of the Great March. We set out at eight o'clock on the last stage, the thunder of our drums in the winding street awakening any somnolent German who might be still 'hogging it' in his feather bed. At Broich we picked up 'D' Company with its sedate, old white charger, Napoleon. At Drove and Kreuzau the inhabitants attempted to fraternise, to the indignation of the Commanding Officer, who 'chastised them with whips.' Trams again re-appeared, to the disgust of the indifferent horsemen. At Niederau we learned we were to be billetted with the remainder of the Brigade in barracks, and finally the tall spires and onion-shaped domes of Duren, the goal of our march, spread out before us. An hour later, the good old Regimental March sounded for the first time on a German barrack square as the Battalion filed in past the little black and white sentry boxes that flanked the entrance to the great grey concrete masses of the Nieue-Kaserne. That night we, all of us, slept the sleep of the just. We were THERE—the Advance Guard of the British Army of the Rhine."

Duren.

The town of Duren lies about five miles west of Cologne. The Battalion remained at Duren until about the middle of January, and were then moved across the Rhine, passing through Cologne and over the famous Kaiser Wilhelm Bridge to Langenfeldt. As we crossed the river, we all felt it our duty to "Wind up the watch on the Rhine." The Colours on this occasion were carried by 2nd Lieuts. Renny and Legg—both sons of retired Officers of the Regiment.

On the 17th, they moved from the barracks to billets in the town, and Battalion Headquarters were at Germeinde-Haus, Moltke Strasse, and the same day 2nd Lieut. Appleby, M.C., and 2nd Lieut. C. Parry-Jones, with 55 other ranks, moved into Cologne for fatigues and guards.

During this period, 2nd Lieuts. C. Glassington and C. B. Browne joined the Battalion, and on 21st December, the Colour Party having returned from Lichfield, the Regimental Colours were handed over to the Battalion. The day was fine, and the Battalion lined each side of Bismarck Strasse. The scene was an impressive one, not to be forgotten by those who were privileged to take part in it. The Colour Party as originally formed—2nd Lieut. S. H. Houle, 2nd Lieut. H. R. Wallis, bearing respectively the King's and Regimental Colours, uncased, and C.S.M. O. M. King, D.C.M., Sergts. J. H. Smith, M.M., and H. Hambleton, M.M.—marched through the lines, the Battalion saluting the Colours. The Colour Party then formed up in front of Bismarck Statue and the Battalion marched past, and the Colours were handed over.

Parade of the Colours, Duren.

Digitized by Google

Langenfeldt.

At Langenfeldt, the Officers were billeted in a chateau in which the owner, a German Countess, and her son also lived. At first, they were inclined to be truculent, but became more amenable towards the end of the Battalion's stay there. The men were living in small bungalows in the grounds of the local Lunatic Asylum. About the end of February, the Battalion was inspected by General Sir C. W. Jacob, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., who made the Battalion a most inspiring speech. On the same parade he presented medal ribbons to various Officers and other ranks, who had been decorated for gallantry in the field.

There were voluntary Church services on the 22nd and 25th December, and on Christmas Day the Battalion had their Christmas dinner in the Germeinde-Haus. On the 29th December, the following Officers joined the Battalion:—Lieut. A. Aitken and 2nd Lieut. G. E. Walker, while the following Officers rejoined from hospital:—2nd Lieuts. H. Johnson and E. C. Powell, M.C.

The Battalion received the congratulations of the General Officer Commanding 2nd Division and General Officer Commanding 6th Infantry Brigade on their smart appearance and the endurance of all ranks on their march into Germany. The maximum strength of the Regiment was now 29 Officers and 771 other ranks, they having had returned from hospital 2 Officers and 16 men and received reinforcements of 8 Officers and 62 other ranks.

Record of 1918.

It may be interesting to note that during the year 1918 the 2nd Battalion, South Staffordshire Regiment, spent no fewer than 175 days in the fighting line from January 1st to the day of Armistice on November 11th, the remaining 139 days being spent in either Brigade or Battalion reserve and support. Most of this time they furnished working parties for trench work and supplies, which goes to show that the old 80th did not fail to live up to the traditions of the grand old County Regiment. Their heaviest work of fighting was:—February, 18 days; March, 24 days; April, 22 days; May, 14 days; June, 20 and July, 22 days. August was 18 days, and September 15 days.

During the month of January, various schemes of Educational Courses were arranged for the men, prior to the demobilisation of time-expired Officers and men. Drills and guard-mounting, route marches, with organised games and football matches, kept the men fully employed during the remainder of their stay in Germany, and the following Officers joined the Battalion:—Captain S. G. Loveridge, Lieut. R. G. Udall, and 2nd Lieuts. G. S. Renny and H. Martin joined on January 6th. 2nd Lieut. T. Purcell rejoined from

Digitized by Google



Photos. by *Lieut. S. H. Houle.*

PLATE 16.

1. B.H.Q., LANGENFELD.
2. ON THE WAY HOME.
3. INSPECTION BY BRIGADIER.
4. IN CAMP, FOVANT.

To face p. 398.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

hospital on the 8th; Lieut. A. B. Miller, D.S.O., M.C., on the 13th, and Lieut. L. Maxfield on the 21st. Lieut.-Colonel W. J. J. Collas, D.S.O., re-assumed command of the Battalion on the 12th, and the demobilised Officers were:—Captain S. G. Loveridge, Lieuts. A. M. Campbell and R. G. Udall, and 2nd Lieuts. B. C. Grant and E. F. Green. Lieut. R. W. A. Gleed, M.C., was demobilised on January 24th. The maximum ration strength of the Battalion for the month was 41 Officers and 745 other ranks, while the demobilised included the above 6 Officers and 99 other ranks, with 1 Officer sent home sick to England.

During the month of February, further Officers and men were demobilised. The Officers were:—Major P. E. B. F. Smith and 2nd Lieuts. E. Wrightson and E. S. Vinden, with 69 other ranks. This left the Battalion of only Cadre strength.

Early in May, the 2nd Battalion received orders to send the Cadre home, and transfer a large draft to the 5th Battalion (T.F.), who were remaining in the Army of Occupation. Lieut.-Colonel W. J. J. Collas, D.S.O., was sent to take over command of the 5th Battalion, and Major S. Harper, M.C., took over command of the Cadre, which left Duren on May 19th, 1919, for Antwerp. After a week's stay in Antwerp, they embarked for England, arriving at Tilbury on 28th May, and proceeded to barracks at Fovant on 30th May.

From Fovant, the Cadre, under Major S. Harper, M.C., proceeded to Lichfield on the 6th June. On the 14th August the Cadre proceeded to Sniggery Camp, near Liverpool, and absorbed the 3rd Battalion. Lieut.-Colonel G. A. Yool, D.S.O., who was at the time commanding the 3rd Battalion, took over command of the 2nd Battalion, the permanent Staff of the 3rd Battalion returning to Lichfield. While at Sniggery Camp the Battalion was called out in aid of the Civil Power and assisted in keeping order in Liverpool, and guarding the railway, during the strike. **Return Home.**

On the 17th of November, the Battalion left Sniggery Camp for Lichfield, and Lieut.-Colonel A. H. C. James, D.S.O., M.V.O., took over command of the Battalion from Lieut.-Colonel G. A. Yool, D.S.O., who took over command of the Regimental Depôt shortly after.

On the 1st July, 1920, the Battalion landed in Ireland to assist in quelling the rebellion there. While serving in Cork, Lieut.-Colonel A. H. C. James, D.S.O., M.V.O., retired, and Lieut.-Colonel M. B. Savage, C.B.E., D.S.O., assumed command of the Battalion on the 2nd January, 1921.

Digitized by Google

CASUALTIES SUSTAINED BY THE 2ND BATTALION, SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE REGIMENT, DURING THE GREAT WAR, 1914-1918.

1914.	*Officers.*	*W.O.'s*	*Sgts.*	*Cpls.*	*Dmrs.*	*Ptes.*
DEATHS (Killed, Died from Wounds and Sickness)	4	—	5	7	1	120
INVALIDED TO ENGLAND (through Wounds and Sickness) ...	22	—	9	21	2	388
MISSING.	Officers				Nil	
	Other Ranks				32	

1915.	*Officers.*	*W.O.'s*	*Sgts.*	*Cpls.*	*Dmrs.*	*Ptes.*
DEATHS (Killed, Died from Wounds and Sickness) ...	16	—	3	15	5	215
INVALIDED TO ENGLAND (through Wounds and Sickness) ...	31	2	36	39	2	1001
MISSING.	Officers				4	
	Other Ranks				102	
PRISONERS OF WAR.	Officers				Nil	
	Other Ranks				20	

1916.	*Officers.*	*W.O.'s*	*Sgts.*	*Cpls.*	*Dmrs.*	*Ptes.*
DEATHS (Killed, Died from Wounds and Sickness)	16	2	9	9	—	238
INVALIDED TO ENGLAND (through Wounds and Sickness) ...	25	3	26	31	1	602
MISSING.	Officers				Nil	
	Other Ranks				28	
PRISONERS OF WAR.	Officers				Nil	
	Other Ranks				13	

1917.	*Officers.*	*W.O.'s*	*Sgts.*	*Cpls.*	*Dmrs.*	*Ptes.*
DEATHS (Killed, Died from Wounds and Sickness	9	1	11	16	—	218
INVALIDED TO ENGLAND (through Wounds and Sickness) ...	26	4	18	21	—	532
MISSING.	Officers				Nil	
	Other Ranks				80	
PRISONERS OF WAR.	Officers				3	
	Other Ranks				154	

1918.	*Officers.*	*W.O.'s*	*Sgts.*	*Cpls.*	*Dmrs.*	*Ptes.*
DEATHS (Killed, Died from Wounds and Sickness	12	—	5	7	—	275
INVALIDED TO ENGLAND (through Wounds and Sickness) ...	54	5	30	58	1	864
MISSING.	Officers				Nil	
	Other Ranks				96	
PRISONERS OF WAR.	Officers				11	
	Other Ranks				358	

NOTE.—The Other Ranks shown as MISSING each year were either traced as PRISONERS OF WAR or found to have been KILLED after a short time, and these figures, therefore, are duplicated under the headings of DEATHS or PRISONERS OF WAR.

Digitized by Google

THE 1st KING'S OWN REGIMENT OF STAFFORDSHIRE MILITIA,

NOW THE

3RD AND 4TH BATTALIONS, SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE REGIMENT.

THE first official appearance of Militia in the County of Stafford is recorded in 1648, when Colonel John Bowyer, of Knypersley, under the authority of Parliament, raised a regiment of foot and two troops of horse. These troops were not in any sense "Regular Troops," but were more in the nature of "Trained Bands" and "Local Levies" for home defence. Their condition during the seventeenth and the greater part of the eighteenth century can only be described as disgraceful, and as a Constitutional force they were an utter failure.

In 1757, when England was fighting all over the world, a new Militia Bill was passed, remodelling that force; but Staffordshire paid a fine in lieu of balloting for its quota. By the year 1776 the County possessed a Militia Corps of eight Companies, under the command of Lord Paget, Sir John Wrottesley being Lieut.-Colonel.

In those days the Militia were moved about a good deal, not only within the County of Stafford, but to more distant parts of the country. To take the year 1779 as an instance, six Companies of the Regiment were quartered at Lichfield, and three at Burton-on-Trent. In February, five Companies were sent to Stafford. In July, the whole Regiment assembled at Stafford, going back to Lichfield in August. In September, it marched to Bristol, leaving detachments at Andover, Basingstoke, Overton, and Whitchurch.

On March 12th, 1779, Lord Lewisham was appointed Lieut.-Colonel *vice* Sir John Wrottesley, who had been promoted into the Line Regiment. Lord Lewisham retained command until the Regiment was disembodied in 1783. Early in January, 1780, the Staffordshire Militia was ordered to Liverpool, thence to Scarborough, but were back at Lichfield before the end of the year. In the early part of 1782, they were billetted at various places in Staffordshire, and in June the whole force marched to Warley Camp, Essex. It was away from the depôt for more than a year, serving in various towns in Buckinghamshire, and was disembodied on the signing of peace with France, Spain, and America in 1783.

Digitized by Google

On war being declared with France in 1793, the force was called up again, the Earl of Uxbridge being in command, with Major W. Sneyd as Lieut.-Colonel. Early this year they were at Launceston and Plymouth, and were later ordered to Winchester, where they were inspected by H.M. George III., who was so pleased with their appearance, and the high character they bore, that he soon after asked for the Regiment to be sent to Windsor on Royal duty.

The Orders at this time give a curious insight into the custom prevailing in the interior economy of the Regiment. One issued in June, 1797, ran as follows:—"The Regt. to parade in their old cloaths and caps. The Grenadiers and Light Infantry and Drummers in their respective dress caps. Musick in Jackets. The Blacks in their best Turbans."(1) "Musick in Jackets" is rather a comical way of describing the Band! Negroes appear to have been generally employed in Military Bands at this period, both as Big Drummers and to beat the Cymbals and Triangle.

The Militia was augmented by Statute in 1797, and this had the effect of adding two Battalions to the Staffordshire Militia. In 1799, Colonel Lord G. L. Gower, commanding the 2nd Staffs. Militia, obtained permission to raise a Regiment for foreign service from the existing Battalions, to be called the "Staffordshire Volunteers," or 2nd Battalion, 52nd Regiment of Foot; 300 volunteers offered themselves, but owing to some misunderstanding, and after an expenditure of £5,000, the men were discharged and their services lost to the Government. The remaining men of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions were afterwards incorporated with the 1st Staffs. Militia, then on King's duty at Windsor. They went into Winter quarters at Lichfield and Stafford in 1800, and in May of that year returned again to Windsor, forming part of the escort to the King and Royal Family on their visit to Weymouth. After the Peace of Amiens in 1801, the Regiment was disembodied at Stafford, after nine years' continuous service. Their uniform at this period was scarlet with yellow facings, and gold lace for the Officers.

At Windsor Castle.

The Peace of Amiens was of short duration, and owing to the ambitious efforts of Napoleon in 1803, the Regiment was re-formed, with a strength of 811 other ranks. They were sent to Windsor and, later, to Weymouth, where they were reviewed by H.M. George III.—who was attended by the Dukes of York, Kent, Sussex, and Cambridge—and were highly complimented by the Commander-in-Chief (Duke of York). On the return of the Court to Windsor, we find the

(1) Hist. Records, 1st K.O.S.M. Captain Wylly. p. 18.

Digitized by Google

Regiment once more in the Royal Borough, where they received additional proofs of their Sovereign's favour, for in 1805, before leaving Windsor for Portsmouth, H.M. George III. conferred on them the distinction of "The King's Own Staffordshire Militia," and the facings on the uniforms was changed from yellow to blue, with gold lace, and the Officers were entitled to wear the device "Windsor Castle" on their waist-buckles. King George III. also presented some glass decanters to the Officers' Mess; these are still in use and highly prized by the Officers of the Regiment. Lieut.-Colonel Walter Sneyd resigned the command in 1805, after 29 years' service in the Regiment, and was succeeded by Major F. Newdigate.

"Windsor Castle" Badge.

The 2nd Battalion of Staffordshire Militia was embodied on 28th June, 1803, with a strength of about 600, and was sent to Newcastle-on-Tyne in August. In the Spring of 1805, the Regiment was sent to Hull, where an order was received to "volunteer the Militia generally." Many volunteered for active service, and the rest of the Regiment marched to Portsmouth and were absorbed into the 1st Battalion, which shortly afterwards again resumed its Royal duty at Windsor. In October, 1806, they paraded before H.M. George III., who inspected them, along with the Royal Horse Guards (Blue), in the Palace Yard, Windsor. In 1812, their Colonel, the Earl of Uxbridge, died, and was succeeded by the Earl of Dartmouth. From Windsor the Regiment went to Colchester, but, before leaving, its Commander received a note from the Adjutant-General, "that the Queen most graciously approved of their conduct during the period they had been stationed at Windsor, and that every branch of the Royal Family united in these most gracious sentiments.

"The Commander-in-Chief adds his tribute of applause as to the orderly and soldier-like manner in which the Regiment has performed its duties, which he is assured has conciliated the regards and obtained for them the general respect and esteem of the inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood of Windsor."(1)

In November, 1813, the Regiment was ordered to London, and relieved the Foot Guards at St. James's and Kew Palaces, on these Regiments being sent to Holland. After the Peace of Paris in 1814, the Regiment returned in three divisions into its own County, and was disembodied after eleven years' service.

On the escape of Napoleon from Elba in 1815, the Regiment was again called up, and in September embarked at Liverpool

(1) Hist. Records, 1st K.O.S.M. Captain Wylly. p. 17.

Digitized by Google

for Dublin, where it remained until April, 1816, when it was once more disembodied, receiving high compliments from the General in Command at Dublin.

From the beginning of the French Revolutionary War in 1793, the Militia of the County of Stafford did duty for more than thirteen years about the person of the venerable King, George III., and the Royal Family. In the same period, it supplied to His Majesty's Regular Forces nearly 100 Officers and upwards of 4,000 able-bodied men. A late gallant General was most anxious to obtain Staffordshire men for his Regiment—he observed "that on service these men were most patient under privation and generally cheerful, always obeying their Officers with alacrity."

The Regimental Orders for this period throw interesting side-lights on the soldier's life of those days. Punishments were very severe; but some Orders verge on the humorous, as for instance:—"R.O. 2nd September, 1804. Lieut.-Colonel Sneyd has been much shocked since he has lived in camp by the excessive and constant habit of swearing he has observed amongst the soldiers: a habit wicked in its effect and disgraceful to those who practice it.

"He is determined, as far as he is able, to prevent their foolish vice, and desires that every Officer and N.C.O. who shall hear any man of his Company swearing after this notice, will, for the first offence, give him a proper reprimand; for the second, order him a duty of fatigue; for the third, an additional guard; and after that confine him and report him to the Commanding Officer."(1)

History is silent about the awful nature of the Colonel's punishment for this offence; probably it was felt that a limit of three swear words to each soldier was sufficient—but it seems only a moderate allowance for the use of the soldier to-day! Especially after what one reads of the "language" used during the Great War!

Forces Re-organised.

From 1816 to 1852 the Militia Force was practically in abeyance, but in the latter year it once more sprang into existence in its present form, viz., a Volunteer Militia. The 1st King's Own Staffordshire Militia assembled at Stafford that year for 21 days' training, under the command of Colonel, the Earl of Dartmouth. In 1854, the Regiment proceeded to Dover for garrison duty in the town, and during this period of duty they supplied no less than 1,200 volunteers from their ranks to Line Regiments. In 1855, on the 17th January, the 1st Militia volunteered for service in the

(1) Hist. Records, 1st K.O.S.M. Captain Wylly. p. 21.

Digitized by Google

Mediterranean, and 596 men, under Colonel Talbot, embarked at Portsmouth on the s.s. "Hausa" for service in the island of Corfu. It was the first Militia Regiment selected for foreign service. It was moved about to various towns in the island, and returned to England in September, 1856, arriving at Lichfield on the 16th September, when the men were paid off and returned to their homes.

On Foreign Service.

They were embodied again in 1857 for permanent service, when the Regiment was sent to Scotland, and detachments were located at Edinburgh, Perth, and Stirling. In 1858, they moved from Edinburgh to Aldershot, and while there formed part of the Division reviewed by H.M. Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort after the Indian Mutiny. In 1860, they were at Weymouth and Portland, and in September of that year were sent to the Northern district, with Headquarters at Newcastle-on-Tyne, detachments being at Sunderland and Tynemouth.

On 3rd April, 1878, during the Zulu War, the Reserves were mobilised, and the Militia was called up for general service; but as the need for their services had passed, on July 20th, 1878, the Reservists were paid off and returned home.

In 1881, a General Order was issued, organising the Infantry of the Line and the Militia on a Territorial footing; and by a subsequent Order the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the King's Own Staffordshire Militia were linked to the Line Battalions as the 3rd and 4th Battalions respectively of the South Staffordshire Regiment, and the facings of the Militia was changed from blue to white, to conform to the dress of the Line Regiments. Under Lord Haldane's scheme of Army Reform, in 1908, they became "Special Reserve" Battalions of the Regiment, still retaining their designation of the 3rd and 4th Battalions, the South Staffordshire Regiment.

"Special Reserve."

During the Boer War of 1900-02, the Militia—now the 3rd Battalion, South Staffordshire Regiment, embarked for South Africa on 17th June, 1901, and did much useful work in guarding Boer prisoners and occupying a line of blockhouses, besides furnishing a Company of Mounted Infantry for more active work.

"The 4th Battalion went out to South Africa on February 11th, 1900, and saw a considerable amount of fighting. It shared in the taking of Fourteen Streams on 5th May, 1900; it formed part of the garrison of Lindley, when the Boer attack of 26th June was repulsed; it was present at the capture of Bethlehem, and defended Winburg against the Boer attack of 26th August, 1900. Subsequently, it rendered

South Africa.

Digitized by Google

good service in guarding the railway line against several Boer attacks."(1)

During the Great War, 1914-1918, the 3rd Battalion formed a reserve for feeding the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the Line. The 4th Battalion was sent to Jersey in 1914, and finally landed in France in October, 1917, and took the place of the 2nd Royal Irish Rifles, in the 7th Infantry Brigade, 25th Division.

When the great German offensive began in March, 1918, the 25th Division was in 4th Corps Reserve, round Achiet, a few miles north-west of Bapaume. It had been rumoured for some time that the Germans would make a great offensive attack on the front held by the British 6th, 4th, and 5th Corps, whose line covered the important main road from Arras to Bapaume and Albert. Important tactical dispositions had been given to the 25th Division, and fixed objectives for a counter-attack should the necessity arise. Unfortunately, when the German attack did come, events moved too rapidly for these plans to materialise, and "owing to the exigencies of the military situation, Brigades and Battalions of the Division were used piecemeal to reinforce the 51st and 6th Divisions. In fact, from the opening phases of the battle up to a time six days later, when the Division was finally withdrawn, it was fighting continually under strange Commanders and a strange Staff."

With the 7th Infantry Brigade.

The 7th Infantry Brigade—consisting of the 10th Battalion, Cheshire Regiment; 1st Battalion, Wiltshire Regiment, and the 4th Battalion, South Staffordshire Regiment—when the attack commenced, had established themselves in the 3rd or Army Line by the evening of the 21st March, and during that night and the following day did good work in improving the trenches. For the next two days, beyond intermittent shelling, this sector of the line was fairly quiet; but at 9.30 a.m., on the 23rd March, the Germans attempted a surprise attack on the left front, held by the 10th Cheshires. This attack was swept away by rifle and Lewis gun fire at 200 yards range. About 2 p.m., the Germans heavily bombarded the whole Brigade front and support lines, and at 3.15 p.m. they attacked with large masses of men in four waves. This attack was completely broken up, not a single wave reaching the wire on the 7th Brigade front. A third attack was made by the Germans later in the afternoon, but was repulsed with great slaughter. The enemy then withdrew to some dead ground about 150 yards east of the front wire and dug themselves in. During the night of 23rd/24th March, Lieut.

(1) *Ex.* inform. General E. K. Daubeney, C.B.E., D.S.O.

Digitized by Google

Tinley and Pte. Ludgate, of the 4th South Staffords, did excellent work, for which they received decorations.

On the morning of the 24th March, the 4th South Staffords were relieved by a Battalion of the 62nd Division, and retired to a position between Fremicourt and Beuquatre, from which position they were able to cover, later in the afternoon, the retirement of other troops from the 3rd or Army line. About 3 p.m., the troops on the right began to withdraw, covered by the 4th South Staffords. During this afternoon, Captain Edgar was killed. The enemy was still coming on in large numbers, but was made to pay a heavy price for every yard of his advance. 2nd Lieut. C. Bates (4th South Staffords) "went forward alone some 300 yards in front of our line, through a heavy barrage, to a commanding position, and lay there in the open under heavy fire for three hours, noting the dispositions of the enemy and sending back information. He then returned and altered the disposition of the platoon in such a manner that he succeeded in holding up the enemy for the remainder of the day, in spite of his persistent efforts to attack in front and turn the flanks. He was twice wounded, but insisted on remaining with his command, and kept them cheerful and confident. When eventually he withdrew his command the following day, he was instrumental in saving what might have been a nasty situation near Fremicourt, as the enemy was pressing heavily; but on his arrival he quickly sized up the situation and got a Lewis gun into position on the railway embankment, and remained firing it himself until all available ammunition was exhausted. He was then able to withdraw, as his action had put a stop to the enemy's attempt to advance in that vicinity."(1)

Battle of Bapaume, 24th/25th March, 1918.

For this gallant action he was awarded the D.S.O.

Since the opening hours of the battle on the 21st March, the 4th South Staffords, in common with other Battalions, had fought without a moment's rest; they had dug innumerable new positions and trenches, and finished on the 27th/28th March by marching 36 miles in 36 hours—a remarkably fine performance.(2)

---

(1) Official Record—*Gazette*.

(2) The casualties of the 4th Battalion for the Battle of Bapaume were :—4 Officers killed, 9 wounded, and 1 missing. Other ranks :—26 killed, 150 wounded, 69 missing. The Officer casualties were :—

KILLED.—Lieut.-Colonel C. E. Blackhall; Captains J. H. Edgar and C. E. Holdsworth; 2nd Lieut. J. B. Small.

WOUNDED.—Captain R. D. Oldham; 2nd Lieuts. C. Bates, W. J. Amos, R. C. Acherley, A. C. Bull, S. J. Davies, H. L. Green, W. C. Hand, and H. L. Sell.

MISSING.—2nd Lieut. S. Dolphin.

Digitized by Google

The honours won by the 4th Battalion in this action were:— 2nd Lieut. C. Bates: D.S.O. 2nd Lieut. H. L. Bell: M.C. Captain L. G. Carr: M.C. Captain (A/Major) C. E. W. Charrington: M.C. Captain F. C. Nicholls, R.A.M.C. (attached South Staffords): M.C. Captain R. D. O. Oldham: M.C.

Two D.C.M.'s were awarded to 20153 C.S.M. S. Clowsley and 12005 Sergt. A. Titley; while Military Medals were awarded to the following:—

48986 Pte. A. Adams, 36960 Pte. R. Birch, 38968 Pte. H. Drabble, 31963 Pte. E. Fearnley, 203588 Pte. H. Foster, 39330 Pte. I. L. Fox, 30667 Corpl. S. Gibbons, 28513 Sergt. F. J. Hare, 40123 Pte. S. Hill, 26153 Pte. G. Hoare, 38443 Pte. Z. Tolley, 35826 Corpl. A. Tolley, 36695 Corpl. T. W. Vaughan.

Battle of The Lys. Ploegsteert Wood, 9th April, 1918.

The 25th Division, after two days' rest and refitting, had received reinforcements, making the Battalions practically up to full strength; and on the last day of March, 1918, entrained for the north, where they took over the Ploegsteert sector from the 2nd Australian Division. Their line, about 7,000 yards long, lay in front of Ploegsteert Wood, in touch with the 19th Division on the left at the river Douve, and then following the river Lys round to the north-west of Armentieres, where the line linked up with the 34th Division.

On the morning of the 9th April, the Germans made a strong attack on the British line south of Armentieres as far as Givenchy, at the same time heavily shelling the 34th Division with mustard gas. At 5.40 a.m., on April 10th, covered by a heavy blanket mist, the Germans effected a crossing of the river Lys, and attacked our lines. The 7th Brigade was on the left, 4th South Staffords on left, with 1st Wilts. on the right, and 10th Cheshires in support.

Under cover of the heavy mist, numerous small parties of the enemy, with machine guns, managed to penetrate the thinly-held British line and obtain a footing in Ploegsteert Wood. Here they created confusion by opening fire from positions behind the British line; but so far the 7th Brigade had resisted all attacks on the left sector of the Divisional front, and were firmly established on a line about 1,000 yards north and east of Ploegsteert Wood.

About 11 a.m., on April 10th, a strong German attack developed on the front of both the 75th and 7th Brigades, and, the line held by the 75th Brigade being broken, by mid-day the attack on the 7th Brigade increased in intensity. They held on until late in the afternoon, when they were

Digitized by Google

ordered to retire to a position on the high ground west of Neuve Eglise, the retirement being covered by the 10th Cheshires from positions on the high ground east of the Wood. Casualties were heavy in the three Battalions of the 7th Brigade during the withdrawal. Throughout the morning they had steadily held their ground against all frontal attacks, but realised that the enemy were gradually creeping round both flanks, increasing the difficulties of a retirement during daylight. After dark, Captain Carr (4th South Staffordshire Regiment) managed to withdraw his Company through the German lines without a single casualty —a remarkable piece of work and entirely due to his skilful leading. Lieut. Bates also distinguished himself by fine leadership; while others conspicuous for good work were 2nd Lieut. Fairie, Lce.-Corpl. Coppock, and Pte. Moore.

At 8 a.m., 12th April, the Germans again attacked heavily all along the 25th Divisional front, when, owing to a report that the enemy had broken through into Bailleul from the south, the 7th Brigade, with 12 machine guns, was moved about 4 p.m. to a position north of Bailleul. This report proving incorrect, the 7th Brigade moved back to a position at Crucifix Corner, where they did excellent work in counter-attacking. Lieut. Miller (4th South Staffordshire Regiment), Pte. Spencer, with his Lewis gun, and Pte. Rose, as a runner, greatly distinguished themselves.

German Attack on Bailleul, 13th/15th April, 1918.

About 8 p.m., on the 14th, the Germans made a desperate attack on Bailleul, but the 7th Brigade not only beat off the attack but organised a counter-attack, capturing a large number of prisoners and machine guns.

The strength of the 4th South Staffords, reduced by continuous fierce fighting, was now a little over 100, all ranks, and the 25th Division was so reduced that none of its three Brigades could muster much over 300 men in each. On the 15th April, the German, again attacking strongly, captured Bailleul, and the whole line was forced to retire back to previously prepared positions, where they linked up with the defensive lines round Kemmel.

After four days' comparative quiet, the Germans launched an attack on the French position on Kemmel Hill. The attack began on the evening of the 23rd April, but failed, and the line was unbroken; but on the 25th the German bombardment increased in intensity. Kemmel Hill was deluged with gas shells, and the Germans succeeded in pushing forward about 1,000 yards in front of Kemmel village. The 25th Division now came under the orders of the 2nd French Cavalry Corps, and a counter-attack was started at 3 a.m., on the 26th April. The three Battalions of the 7th Brigade

Digitized by Google

were on the left, the 10th Cheshires and 4th South Staffords in the front line, with the 1st Wilts. in support. Owing to the heavy fog in the early morning, the leading Battalions had some difficulty in keeping direction, but by 5 a.m. they had successively gained their objectives and were established east of Kemmel Beck. Unfortunately, there was not much progress made by the other Divisions on the left and right of the 25th Division, and the position gained was untenable, causing the two Brigades of the 25th Division to retire to their line of the Kemmel Beck. Here, during the afternoon, the whole line was consolidated and the Battalions re-organised.

Kemmel Beck, April, 1918.

Fighting continued until May 4th, when the 7th Brigade was relieved by the 15th French Regiment, and the following day the 25th Division concentrated in an area about 10 miles west of Poperinghe.(1)

Lieut. A. B. Miller was awarded the D.S.O. for conspicuous gallantry and leadership in the attack near Kemmel on April 26th. "After all the senior Officers of the Battalion had become casualties and things were critical, he immediately assumed command, re-organised and led the Battalion with great dash and determination, killing a large number of the enemy and taking about 70 prisoners.

"When the withdrawal became absolutely necessary, owing to both flanks being exposed and to enfilade machine gun fire from Kemmel Hill, he formed defensive flanks, organised his force to give mutual covering fire, and so got back to our front line in perfect order.

"His prompt action and brilliant organisation and leadership made what was on the verge of being a failure a brilliant success."(2)

---

(1) The losses of the 4th South Staffords from 9th April to May 4th were:—4 Officers killed, 12 wounded, 8 missing. Other ranks:—20 killed, 213 wounded, 481 missing.

KILLED.—Lieut.-Colonel J. E. Stewart (8th Borderers); Captain O. Barlow, M.C.; 2nd Lieuts. E. Pepper, E. L. Stiles, and H. W. Wheeler.

WOUNDED.—Major R. A. T. Rees; Captain L. G. Carr (died of wounds); Lieut. H. J. Bristol (died of wounds), Lieut. C. G. Hancock; 2nd Lieuts. C. Bates, W. B. Brown, A. E. Collins, A. Moorcroft, I. M. L. Oliver, and J. McP. McKenzie.

MISSING.—Lieut.-Colonel L. K. H. Finch, D.S.O. (prisoner of war); Captain F. C. Nicholls, R.A.M.C. (prisoner of war); Lieut. F. R. Laver (wounded); 2nd Lieuts. A. T. Kingsley, S. K. Morey, A. H. Nutt (wounded and missing), L. R. J. Tonks (wounded), A. P. Walker, and H. W. Webb (wounded and missing).

(2) Official Record—*Gazette*.

Digitized by Google

Other honours awarded for this action are as follows:—

M.C.—2nd Lieut. C. Bates, Captain L. G. Carr, 2nd Lieut. D. P. C. Imrie, 2nd Lieut. O. H. Mason, Lieut. A. B. Miller, 2nd Lieut. J. J. Woolley.

M.M.—The following received the award of the Military Medal:—

Medal:—45336 Pte. S. J. Barty, 235260 Lce.-Corpl. E. Coppock, 13563 Pte. W. Forsbury, 24649 Pte. H. Moore, 45304 Pte. F. Rose, 39191 Pte. W. Spencer, 14058 Pte. G. Stevens, 10343 Pte. P. F. Taylor.

"Private W. Forsbury was awarded the M.M. for gallantry while in charge of a squad of stretcher-bearers during the attack in Kemmel village. When the main body was forced to retire, he remained behind and succeeded in bringing in a number of wounded men, who, but for his coolness, would certainly have been taken prisoners."(1)

On the 9th May, 1918, the 25th Division was moved from Poperinghe further south to near Fismes, about 20 miles south-east of Soissons, in Champagne. Here they once more came under the leadership of the 9th Corps.

Resting and Training.

All were exhausted by the recent heavy fighting and urgently needed a period of rest and training to accustom the reinforcements to become absorbed in their respective Regiments. This rest was promised to the troops in this sector—for no hint was given of the impending tragedy so soon to be enacted over this historic ground. About the middle of May, reports were received of the accumulation of immense dumps of ammunition, and many field guns dug in, behind the German front, all of which proved that the enemy were making preparations for an attack on a large scale. Preparations were made by both British and French to meet it; but the time was too short, and the British Divisions were terribly short both of guns and material to meet the German onslaught when it came. The 25th Division had been moved up to Guyencourt, about two miles south of the Aisne, where they were in Corps reserve.

At 1 a.m., on May 27th, the Germans began a heavy bombardment with gas shells of every description and high explosives. The villages in the back areas as far as Fismes, as well as the support and front lines, were deluged with shells from upwards of a thousand guns, to which the British and French were only able to reply with a total of 144 field

(1) Official Record—*Gazette.*

Digitized by Google

guns, 48 howitzers, and 118 medium and heavies, chiefly French.

Battle of The Aisne, 1918.

The hurricane nature of the German attack quickly gained them substantial successes, and the 25th Division was ordered up to hold the second line of defence south of the Aisne, along the heights south of the Maizy—Cormicy road, thence bending back south-east to Trigny—a line of about 12 miles. They were in position by 10 a.m., with the 7th Brigade on the right. This Brigade consisted of the 1st Wilts., 10th Cheshires, and 4th South Staffords, the latter commanded by Lieut.-Colonel A. M. Morris, D.S.O. The 4th South Staffords were in the centre of the Brigade front, with the 10th Cheshires on the right, and 1st Wilts. on the left—all four Companies of each Battalion were in the line.

About three in the afternoon, the enemy attacked in great force. The position of the Cheshires' and South Staffords' trenches was very unsatisfactory, and the "field of fire" was very poor. During this severe fighting, "2nd Lieut. Lloyds (4th South Staffords) commanded 'C' Company with great dash and skill during the retirement; while 2nd Lieut. F. Davies (commanding 'A' Company, 4th South Staffords) proved himself invaluable, for when his Battalion was nearly surrounded he successfully covered their retirement with a few men of his Company, afterwards successfully extricating his own men. On the following day, south of Prouilly, he hung on to a very tactical position with the utmost resolution, though he lost the greater number of his men and was himself wounded. Throughout these two days' fighting, his personal disregard for danger was an example to everyone, and his skilful handling of his men saved the Battalion on two occasions."

The morning of May 28th found the 7th Brigade along the high ground east of Prouilly, with troops of the 62nd Brigade, 21st Division, on its right. The previous evening, owing to the losses sustained by the 7th Brigade, a composite Battalion of about 300 men was formed from parties of the 1st Wilts., 4th South Staffords, and 10th Cheshires, under Major Cannon, 1st Wilts., with some machine guns and 40 men of the 130th Field Company, R.E. These men held their position all night on the high ground south of Bouvencourt. The Germans attempted a surprise attack about 2.30 a.m., but were beaten off. Fighting continued until June 9th, but the 25th Division, although sadly depleted in numbers by ceaseless fighting, continued to fight, and furnished composite Battalions. These were rushed up to various points of the attack where their help was urgently needed. After the 18th June, the three composite Battalions

Digitized by Google

formed from the 7th Brigade were withdrawn from the line, and a few weeks later the 25th Divisional Infantry Brigades were disbanded and absorbed by their Regular units.

The 4th Battalion Disbanded.

This was the finish of the 4th South Staffordshire Regiment as a separate entity; but, though joining in the War as late as October, 1917, before they were broken up in June, 1918, they fully maintained the heroic traditions of the famous old Regiment, and added greatly to its honour.(1)

The honours awarded for the Battle of the Aisne were as follows:—2nd Lieut. F. Davis, D.S.O.; 2nd Lieut. H. Appleby, M.C.; 2nd Lieut. H. A. Hawkins, M.C.; 2nd Lieut. W. H. R. Lloyds, M.C.; 42811 Pte. W. Thompson, D.C.M.; 36030 Pte. (Lce.-Corpl.) M. L. Bates, M.M.; 12735 Pte. W. Edwards, M.M.; 241256 Corpl. W. H. Gilbert, M.M.; 42771 Corpl. H. Pearce, M.M.; 10175 Pte. W. Rhodes, M.M.; 11341 Pte. (Lce.-Corpl.) J. Sedgley, M.M.; 30594 Pte. (Lce.-Corpl.) J. Skidmore, M.M.

From first to last, while in the 25th Division, the 4th Battalion, South Staffordshire Regiment, won and was awarded 3 D.S.O.'s, 14 M.C.'s, 3 D.C.M.'s, and 25 M.M.'s—all won between the 21st March and 14th June, 1918. The battles in which they took part were:—

BATTLE OF BAPAUME, 24th/25th March, 1918.
BATTLE OF THE LYS. Ploegsteert Wood, 9th April, 1918.
,, ,, ,, Bailleul, 13th/15th April, 1918.
,, ,, ,, Kemmel, 17th/19th and 25th/26th April, 1918.
,, ,, THE AISNE, 27th May to 6th June, 1918.

---

(1) Their casualties for the severe fighting from 26th May until June 14th, 1918, were:—1 Officer killed, 10 wounded, 4 missing. Other ranks:—14 killed, 111 wounded, 186 missing.

KILLED.—2nd Lieut. L. H. Lycett.

WOUNDED.—Captain J. D. Hewitson, Captain L. J. Kelsey, M.C.; Lieut. A. B. Miller, M.C.; 2nd Lieuts. T. Cartwright, F. Davis, H. J. Foley, W. R. Jones, J. A. Greatorex, H. B. Lacey, and A. Moorcroft. Lieut. A. J. Hull, M.O.R.C., U.S.A. (attached 4th South Staffs.).

MISSING.—2nd Lieut. L. Paramore, 2nd Lieut. A. St. Leger (wounded).

Digitized by Google

5TH AND 6TH BATTALIONS (T.F.).

These two Battalions were formed on April 1st, 1908, at the time of the disbandment of the old Volunteer Force, which had existed for nearly fifty years.

As Volunteer Battalions, they were originally the 2nd and 3rd Volunteer Battalions of the South Staffordshire Regiment, and their Headquarters were respectively Walsall and Wolverhampton.

Boer War, 1900-02.

During the Boer War of 1900-1902, the three South Staffordshire Battalions, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, provided three Service Companies, made up of units from each Battalion, for service in South Africa. The first Service Company, commanded by Captain H. Denton, of "I" Company, 3rd Battalion, were attached to General Rundle's Division. They were employed mostly in guarding convoys and protecting the railways, and saw some fighting at Willow Grange. Most of the fighting they experienced was in the hills round Ficksburg, in the Orange River Colony. The second Service Company was taken out by Captain G. H. Smith, of the 2nd (Walsall) Battalion, and a third Service Company was taken out by Captain and Hon. Major V. J. Magrane.

When Lord Haldane's new Territorial Scheme of Army Reform was introduced in 1908, a Territorial Association was formed in the County of Stafford, and the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Volunteer Battalions became the 5th and 6th Battalions, South Staffordshire Regiment (T.F.), and formed part of the 46th North Midland Division. It was one of the first Staffordshire Battalions to complete establishment, and Lieut.-Colonel T. F. Waterhouse was appointed to the command of the Regiment. In 1909, Colours were, for the first time, presented to the various units of the Territorial Army, and on the Colours of the 5th and 6th Battalions appeared the Battle Honour:—

"SOUTH AFRICA, 1900-1902."

When War was declared on August 4th, 1914, the Staffordshire Infantry Brigade, which had been hurriedly withdrawn from its camp at Towyn—almost on arrival—was immediately mobilised and placed on a war footing. After a period of strenuous training, these two Battalions formed part of the 137th Infantry Brigade, of the 46th North Midland Division, the first complete Division of Territorials to take the field. The 1/5th Battalion was commanded by Colonel A. R. Crawley, and the 1/6th Battalion by Lieut.-Colonel T. F. Waterhouse.

Digitized by Google

The 46th North Midland Division landed in France, at Havre, on the 3rd and 5th March, 1915. Shortly after landing, they were sent into the old salient just outside Armentieres, where they received their first "baptism of fire." After a few days here, the 137th Infantry Brigade, of which these two Battalions formed part, took over a section of the line facing Messines, where much heavy work was experienced in building and consolidating the line, the 1/6th Battalion being alternatively relieved by the 1/5th Battalion. Here they experienced a few casualties. Later, they were moved further north into the Ypres salient, as the 46th North Midland Division had now joined the Second Army, under General Plumer. After a tour in this sector, they were sent southwards to take their share in the Battle of Loos, and were attached to the First Army, commanded by Sir Douglas Haig. They were in the 11th Corps, commanded by General Haking.

The Battle of Loos, 1915.

This was their first and most trying test, for in attacking the Hohenzollern Redoubt, on the 13th October, 1915, they were fighting over the same ground where the 1st South Staffords had been attacking in the opening phase of the Battle of Loos. The heaviest part of the second phase of the attack, on October 13th, was borne by the 46th North Midland Division, the objective of the 1/5th and 1/6th Battalions being the German trench known as "Big Willie."

The attack was made from the eastern end of what was called "Big Willie" trench, and was intended to work forward to Fosse 8. As soon as the South Staffords left their parapets, they came under a deadly cross-fire from three sides. With a rush they captured the main trench, but owing to heavy machine gun fire swift progress was impossible, and the attack resolved itself into a struggle of bombing parties. The South Staffords fought their way along "Big Willie," and far into the night this soldiers' battle continued, for it had become an affair of individual gallantry and endurance rather than any battle plan. Here, for three days, they fought and endured like the heroes of old, until they were relieved by the 2nd Guards Brigade.

The result was a gain of the main trench of the Redoubt, but no more. This was not the fault of the Battalions who had led the attack, for the artillery preparation had been insufficient to clear the obstacles and make progress possible across that awful ground.

After refitting, they undertook a tour in the line at Neuve Chapelle. At the end of December, 1915, they were sent to Egypt, and returned to France in February, 1916, when they went into the trenches at Neuville St. Vaast, holding the line in that part which was known as the Labyrinth. Here, owing

Digitized by Google

to the shocking condition of the trenches, caused as much by the severity of the weather as by the mining operations of the enemy, the 6th underwent some of their worst experiences. During the snowstorms of that period, the hardships were very keenly felt, and the Bosche's activity underground only added to the strain. Mines, to say the least of them, are most unpleasant forms of trench warfare, and during their tour of duty in the line the South Staffords were blown up no fewer than nine times. After a month's hardly-earned rest, they began to prepare for taking part in the great battles of the Somme, which began on July 1st, 1916.

Attack on Gommecourt, 1916.

On the 1st July, the 137th Infantry Brigade was ordered to attack Gommecourt road and village, a point in front of the British line about four miles north of Beaumont Hamel, looking towards Bapaume. The attack was ordered to commence at 7.30 a.m., in four waves, and after an intense barrage from our artillery, covered by a smoke barrage, the men advanced to the enemy's first line, which was penetrated by "D" Company of the 1/6th South Staffords. The other Companies were not so successful, owing to the intense artillery fire of the enemy, who plastered the front of the attack with an intense shrapnel barrage, which must have been directed by enemy observers, for it followed our troops as they moved forward. Other small parties were able to enter the enemy's line, but could not obtain a permanent footing there. Others were held up by the enemy's wire which had not been so well cut. From dawn till long after noon our men endured this awful fire, but the ground penetrated could not be held, and by the evening the Brigade was back in their old trenches. This attack was described by a correspondent of one of the London newspapers, "as heroic as anything in the war." But though costly the attack was not fruitless, for it occupied the bulk of the German defence and prevented the transfer of enemy troops to other points where the British were more successful.

After Gommecourt, the Division took over a portion of the line between that place and Arras, continuing the harassing duties of trench warfare until October, when they went out for six weeks' rest and repairs. They spent the Winter of 1916-1917 in the trenches, their experiences being of a very trying character. Mud and water, sometimes knee-deep, sometimes neck-deep, are memories of that time. During the Summer of 1917 they did splendid work in trench raids, much valuable information was obtained, and many prisoners taken.

Capture of Hill 65, 1917.

On the 24th June, 1917, "A" and "D" Companies, 1/6th Battalion, led by Captain E. W. Page, went "over the top" and succeeded in taking Hill 65, a slag heap which gave a commanding view of the country round Lens and south-east of it; a position which the Germans failed to recapture.

Digitized by Google

During the year 1917, the Division held the line at La Bassée and Lens, and for some time were engaged as a mobile counter-attack division. Subsequently, when the Germans broke through near La Bassée, they were sent in to hold on at all costs, and this command was bravely carried out, whilst the enemy were vigorously attacking on the flank with the object of cutting them off. In that sector they remained until their removal further south in September, 1918, ready for the attack on the Hindenburg line at Bellenglise, on September 29th, 1918. For some weeks before they had undergone a period of strenuous training, and had become a finely organised and fighting force when they moved out to capture what was regarded as the strongest sector of the Hindenburg line.

Bellenglise lies a few miles north of St. Quentin, and was a very strong position. It was the key of the German position, and once the canal was forced there the defences on either side would be turned. The work of crossing the Scheldt Canal was entrusted to the 46th North Midland Division. A writer describes it as an amazing performance: "The canal before them was some 50 or 60 feet wide, sometimes as much as 10 deep in water. It was a morning of thick fog when, behind the tornado of the barrage, the Midlanders, carrying lifebelts and rafts, advanced to the attack. Some parts of the canal were impassable, so the crossing had to be made on a narrow front. Swimming or wading, in some cases using the foot-bridges which the enemy had left undestroyed, they passed the canal west and north of Bellenglise, swarmed up the farther wall, and took the German trenches on the far bank. Then, fanning out, they attacked in rear the position to the south, capturing many batteries still in action. That day the 46th North Midland Division took over 4,000 prisoners and 70 guns."

Capture of Bellenglise, 1918.

Their wonderful achievement earned the special mention of the Division in Sir Douglas Haig's seventh despatch, who said: "So thorough and complete was the organisation for this attack, and so gallantly, rapidly, and well was it executed by the troops, that this one Division took on this day over 4,000 prisoners and 70 guns."

2/5TH AND 2/6TH BATTALIONS, SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE REGIMENT (T.F.).

These Battalions were formed September, 1914, by Army Order, September 3rd, 1914, the Walsall Battalion being commanded by Lieut.-Colonel G. Fiddian Green, and the Wolverhampton Battalion by Lieut.-Colonel H. Taylor. Their business was to recruit and train for the 1/5th and

Digitized by Google

1/6th South Staffordshire Battalions (T.F.) respectively, and it is worthy of remembrance that at the beginning of the War the men of South Staffordshire raised—voluntarily—four new Territorial Battalions, besides finding recruits, not only for their first line, but for other Staffordshire Battalions as well.

In February, 1915, these two Battalions became part of the 176th Infantry Brigade, of the 59th Division, the other two Battalions of the Brigade being the 2/5th and 2/6th North Staffordshire Regiment (T.F.). During the period of training at Luton and St. Albans, these two Battalions furnished many drafts for France to replace casualties in the first line.

Rebellion in Dublin, 1916.

When the rebellion broke out in Dublin, on Easter Sunday, April 23rd, 1916, the 59th Division was at once ordered to Dublin. During the severe fighting in the city, the Battalions were continually engaged, and had several casualties. They remained in Ireland until January 17th, 1917, when they crossed to Liverpool, and went into camp at Codford, near Salisbury. They left Codford on February 25th, 1917, and proceeded to France, landing at Havre the following day. The 2/5th Battalion was commanded by Colonel J. Armstrong, and the 2/6th by Lieut.-Colonel J. Stuart Wortley. They were sent to the Somme area, and held the line near Berny, Gizancourt and Bernes in March and April. "In July, the same year, at Beaucamp, a patrol of the 2/5th Battalion had a sharp encounter with a German patrol, and, later, two M.M.'s were awarded members of this Battalion for gallantry in finding and rescuing missing men of the patrol in broad daylight, saving their lives and preventing enemy identification under heavy fire."

During this month, these two Battalions, with the remainder of the Brigade, were in training at Barastre, and later, in August, at Winnezeele, in the Ypres area.

During the third Battle of Ypres, these Battalions held the line near Wieltze, taking part in the attack on the 26th September. In this action, they successfully reached their first objective and the second objective of the attack, capturing 15 prisoners and a machine gun, and repelling an enemy counter-attack next day with heavy loss.

During the month of October, they moved into the Lens area, holding the line in the Cite de Riaumont sector and repelling a number of enemy raids. In November, the 2/5th Battalion received three M.M.'s for gallantry in the Wieltze operations, and at the end of the month these two Battalions were holding the line near Ribecourt, repelling two powerful enemy attacks on December 1st at Havrincourt Wood, while later in the month the 2/5th Battalion conducted a very

Digitized by Google

successful raid, capturing a prisoner and inflicting considerable casualties on the enemy.

For their work at the Marne on January 1st, 1918, the 2/5th Battalion received a D.S.O., three M.C.'s, one D.C.M., and three M.M.'s. On the 30th January, 1918, the 2/5th Battalion was disbanded and their personnel distributed among the other Battalions of the Regiment.

Lieut.-Colonel J. H. Porter, D.S.O., succeeded Colonel J. Armstrong in command of the 2/5th Battalion in April, 1917, and remained with the Battalion until it was disbanded. Lieut.-Colonel J. Stuart Wortley, who commanded the 2/6th Battalion—which was not disbanded until March, 1918—was reported "Missing, believed killed" on 21st March, 1918. This was in the early days of the great German attack on Bullecourt. The 2/6th were nearly wiped out, and what was left of them were taken out of the line and distributed among the other Staffordshire Battalions.

THE 3/5TH AND 3/6TH BATTALIONS, South Staffordshire Regiment (T.F.) were formed in 1915, for training and supplying drafts respectively to the 1/5th, 2/5th, 1/6th, and 2/6th, and did not leave England. They were commanded: 2/5th, by Lieut.-Colonel E. A. Crump; 3/6th by Lieut.-Colonel H. E. Twentyman, and were disbanded at the end of the War.

7TH (SERVICE) BATTALION.

Raised at Wolverhampton in 1914, it was trained at Grantham, and went out to Gallipoli in 1914, under the command of Lieut.-Colonel A. H. Daukes, and formed part of the 33rd Infantry Brigade, 11th Division.

The Battalion left England on June 30th, 1915, and, embarking at Liverpool, arrived at Mudros on July 21st. They then, as part of the 33rd Infantry Brigade, proceeded to Helles, landing close to the shot-riddled "River Clyde," the collier that had helped the landing of the 29th Division. On the 23rd July, the Battalion took over the reserve trenches held by the 9th Sherwood Foresters, on the slopes of Achi Baba. After a short period in reserve, they were moved forward into the "Horse Shoe" position. Here a few casualties occurred, and on July 28th the Battalion re-embarked for the island of Imbros, where they rejoined the rest of the Division. Preparations were now made for the landing at Suvla Bay, and on the night of August 6th/7th, 1915, the Battalion again embarked on small craft for the surprise landing.

Landing at Helles, 1915.

In the attack on Anafarta Ridge, the Battalion came under a murderous shrapnel and rifle fire, and casualties were very

Digitized by Google

heavy. "The Battalion behaved magnificently, but were overwhelmed by an enemy who had every position of advantage," and, favoured by a knowledge of the country denied to our men, were able to put up a strong defence. Nearly all the Officers were either killed or wounded, but for three days the 7th South Staffords and the 6th Border Regiment held an old Turkish communication trench running on to Chocolate Hill until they were relieved by the 32nd Brigade. What was left of them returned to the beach, and the Battalion was re-organised; reinforcements, which arrived from Imbros, enabled the four Company basis to be maintained.

Attack on Anafarta Ridge.

On August 21st, they took part in another assault on the Turkish positions, the objective being a strong point known as "Hetman Chair." This attack failed, and though the 7th South Staffords never came properly into action, they had more than 300 casualties, due to heavy shell fire as they were advancing for the attack.

Colonel A. H. Daukes had been killed in the first attack, with many other Officers, and was succeeded in the command by Colonel T. D. Seckham. After their terrible smashing up, the Battalion needed careful re-organisation. This was a slow process, but after weeks of unceasing effort confidence was restored, and by the end of September the Battalion was four Company strength again. Desultory fighting during a tour of some of the advanced posts caused some casualties. While the Battalion were in Brigade reserve, Lord Kitchener visited the Peninsula, and as a result of his inspection orders were given to evacuate the Peninsula. All the troops had been cleared by December 19th, 1915, and the 7th South Staffords were the last to leave, disembarking at Imbros on December 20th.

From Imbros, the Battalion, on January 28th, 1916, embarked for Egypt, and went into a large Concentration Camp at Sidi Bishr, where the training was continued. On July 1st, the Battalion sailed from Alexandria for Marseilles, and on arriving in France was posted in the Arras sector. At the end of August, the Battalion was moved to the famous Somme railhead, Acheux, and encamped in Acheux Wood. They had their share in the great Somme fighting in September, 1916, particularly at Thiepval Wood, and at Hamel and Beaumont Hamel, when they were withdrawn, and went into rest camp at Acheux. During the month of November, 1916, they were mostly engaged in the fighting on the Ancre river, and the Brigade was relieved on the 29th November by the 32nd Brigade, and went into Divisional Reserve. Their casualties for the fighting on the Ancre were nearly 100.

In Egypt.

Digitized by Google

They were in the line again on 9th January, 1917, and did good work in patrols in this sector of the line; and on the 18th moved to billets at Cramont. They took their share of the fighting in the Battle of Messines in June, and in the third Battle of Ypres. Later, they were, in July, 1917, in the Ypres sector, where No. 17114 Private T. Barratt won the Victoria Cross. "It was almost entirely due to his bravery, that the men were successfully withdrawn back to safety. He remained in the position until the last possible moment, covering the withdrawal of the platoon, and accounted for a number of German snipers; and when the platoon was safely back, Private Barratt got back unaided, only to be killed by a shell after reaching the lines." The Divisional Commander said subsequently: "I know of no award of the Victoria Cross more richly merited. Amongst the records of stirring deeds, this stands out as second to none." Not much more than a boy, this lad always proved himself a veteran in war.

They were in the Battle of Poelcapelle, where they did good work, and finally came out of the line on October 8th, having suffered over 120 casualties.

Their hopes of a long rest at La Commune after the Battle of Poelcapelle were soon dashed to the ground, for the Battalion received orders to move up to the Lens—Loos area, where they remained during the month of November, 1917. They then had a tour of duty in the Hulluch sector, and held this defence for seven months continuously—16 days in the line and eight days out. This was from the end of November, 1917, and all through the dark days of the great German offensive, which began in March, 1918, until the close of the War.

In January, 1919, the Battalion was presented with a King's Colour in double silk, and preparations for consecrating the Colours were at once undertaken; and on February 14th, 1919, the consecration and presentation of the Colours took place in the historic town of Condé, in Northern France. It was a great day for the 7th Battalion, and those who were privileged to be present are not likely to forget such an impressive event.

Presentation of Colours.

As each day passed, the strength of the Battalion became weaker. Officers and men were demobilised in large numbers, until at last only Cadre strength was left. These reached England in March, 1919, when they proceeded to Lichfield for demobilisation, the recently presented Colours of this and the other Service Battalions being committed to the custody of the Dean and Chapter of Lichfield Cathedral, where they now remain, with other glorious trophies of the South Staffordshire Regiment.

Digitized by Google

8TH (SERVICE) BATTALION, SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE REGIMENT.

This Battalion was raised at Lichfield as one of the Service Battalions of the New Army in 1914. After training at Wool, Dorset, it was sent to France under the command of Lieut.-Colonel G. M. Going, and landed there on July 15th, 1915, as part of the 51st Infantry Brigade, 17th Division. From this date until January, 1916, it was operating in the Ypres sector, taking part in engagements at Voomezelle, Sanctuary Wood, and Railway Wood.

After a period of trench warfare for the first two months of 1916, in March it was moved to Armentieres in preparation for the great Somme battles. In June, they moved up to Morlancourt, and during July they assisted in the capture of Fricourt and Montaubon, during what is officially called the Battle of Albert, 1916. They had their share in the fierce fighting for the possession of Delville Wood, that place of evil renown that cost so many valuable lives before success was finally won. In September and October, they were in the Hebuterne area, and November found them again at Montaubon, where for some weeks they had a spell of trench warfare; the month of December being spent at Carnoy, resting and refitting.

Early in January, 1917, the Battalion took over sections of the line in Les Bœufs and at Morval, experiencing another period of trench warfare, and in the intervals of rest preparing for the advance to the Hindenburg Line. The Arras offensive, which began on April 9th and lasted until May 15th, found them on Vimy Ridge, engaged in the first battles of Arras. They were in and out of the front line during May and June, taking part in the battles of the Scarpe and in the advance north of the river Scarpe. For the months of August and September, they held the Greenlands Hill sector, and in the interval from trench warfare were actively preparing for the Battle of Cambrai, which began on 20th November, their position being at Turenne Crossing; and later took part in the second Battle of Passchendaele, where their losses were heavy. Afterwards, they were withdrawn to Havrincourt Wood for resting and refitting and repairing losses.

They remained here, in the Cambrai sector, during the month of January, 1918, and in February were disbanded, and re-organised with other units as the 7th Entrenching Battalion.

The 8th Service Battalion, from its first day of active service until its disbandment on account of its serious losses, worthily

Digitized by Google

upheld the glorious traditions of the old County Regiment. I have not been able to ascertain its full list of casualties, only the list of killed. This total reveals the wonderful spirit which inspired all ranks, and is the more remarkable as all these men were enlisted from civil life, with little preparation for the horrors of modern warfare. The killed were:—26 Officers and 610 other ranks, while the number taken prisoners was only four.

9TH BATTALION (PIONEERS), SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE REGIMENT.

This Service Battalion was raised at Lichfield on September 23rd, 1914, whence it proceeded to Bourley Bottom, Aldershot, where it remained training until February, 1915. It was formed into a Pioneer Battalion in December, 1914, and during the first six months of 1915 it was training at Aldershot, Folkestone, and at Bromley and Westerham, Kent, afterwards moving to Bordon Camp, from whence it went abroad in August, 1915.

It formed part of the 69th Infantry Brigade, 23rd Division, and landed in France 25th August, 1915, under the command of Lieut.-Colonel E. H. Thruston. For the remainder of the year and until April, 1916, the Battalion was employed in the Armentieres area, and did excellent work in repairing roads and trenches. They did splendid work on the Somme during the great battles of 1916, at Ypres and Messines.

They remained in the Ypres sector until November, 1917, when they were moved, with other British troops, to Italy, where they did their share in helping to smash up the great Austrian offensive, which was launched in June, 1918. They remained in Italy until February, 1919, the Cadre of the Battalion arriving at Lichfield on the 3rd April, 1919, when they were demobilised.

As a Pioneer Battalion, they did some remarkable work, particularly in tunnelling. They built many bridges over the Piave, in Italy; one, especially, built over the Livenza river, was capable of carrying a weight of over ten tons.

That their work entailed considerable personal risk is obvious, for although I am unable to supply the total wounded, their casualty list of killed was:—5 Officers and 165 other ranks.

The new Colours presented to this Battalion now rest with the others on the west wall of the North Transept in Lichfield Cathedral.

Digitized by Google

THE 10TH AND 11TH BATTALIONS were formed as Reserve Battalions, and furnished drafts for the other Battalions. They remained in England.

THE 12TH BATTALION was a Labour Battalion, and served in France and Flanders in 1916 and 1917.

There was formed, in addition to the foregoing Battalions, a

1ST GARRISON BATTALION. This proceeded to India, where they served during 1917 and 1918.

The Colours of the 7th, 8th, 9th, and the 1st Garrison Battalion were handed over to the care of the Dean and Chapter of Lichfield Cathedral on July 10th, 1920. They are now fixed on the west wall of the North Transept of the Cathedral.

Digitized by Google

APPENDICES.

SUCCESSION OF COMMANDING OFFICERS, 38TH AND 80TH.

THE UNIFORM OF THE REGIMENT.

HONOURS AWARDED 1914-1918.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

APPENDIX I.

Succession of Commanders of the 38th Regiment of Foot (1st Battalion, South Staffordshire Regiment) from its formation in 1705.

COLONEL LUKE LILLINGSTON served some years in an English Regiment in the service of Holland, 1674; and accompanied the Prince of Orange (William III.) to England in 1688. Served in Ireland during campaign of 1689-91. Appointed Lieut.-Colonel of Sir John Foulke's Regiment of Foot, 1st October, 1693. Accompanied that Regiment to the West Indies the same year, and was present at the capture of Martinique in 1693. He succeeded to the Colonelcy on October 30th, 1693, and raised his new Regiment, the 38th Foot, on March 25th, 1705. He was made Brig.-General on April 22nd, 1708, and died on April 6th, 1713. He disposed of the Colonelcy on 2nd June, 1708, to

COLONEL JAMES JONES, who had been his Second-in-Command from the formation of the 38th Foot. Colonel Jones saw service in the West Indies with his Regiment, and in 1711 he disposed of the Command to

LIEUT.-COLONEL FRANCIS ALEXANDER, who had been appointed Lieut.-Colonel of the 38th, on 7th June, 1708. He had seen a few years of service when he obtained the command of the Regiment, but his promotion was very rapid. He obtained his Commission as Lieut. in January, 1692, in the Duke of Bolton's 1st Regiment of Foot, Adjutant in March, 1694, and Major of Colonel W. Breton's Regiment 25th March, 1705. He saw service in the West Indies, and resigned the command on 23rd September, 1717. He died on February 24th, 1723, and was succeeded by

LIEUT.-COLONEL VALENTINE MORRIS. This Officer served in the West Indies during the reign of Queen Anne, but the dates of his Commissions prior to 1712 are not forthcoming. On the 11th November, 1712, he was appointed Major of the 38th, and promoted Lieut.-Colonel 30th March, 1713, serving with the same rank in 1740. He died about 1747. This Officer's son, Valentine Morris, in a letter to Lord Dartmouth, dated 26th March, 1773, says:—"My father served the Crown for nearly forty years in the Army with singular honour and reputation." (Dartmouth MS. Vol 2, p. 495.) He was succeeded by

LIEUT.-COLONEL BERNARD WHALEY, who was appointed Captain of the 38th Foot on its formation, became Major, and held the command of the Regiment from 1712 to 1715. His period of service was entirely in the West Indies. Next in command was

LIEUT.-COLONEL GEORGE LUCAS, who was appointed Lieutenant of the Grenadier Company in the 38th on 24th August, 1713; Captain, 17th July, 1714; Brev.-Lieut.-Colonel in the West Indies, 16th April,

Digitized by Google

1718; Regimental Major, 15th December, 1738; Lieut.-Colonel of the Regiment, 2nd April, 1741. He died at Brest in 1743, when holding the post of Lieut.-Governor of Antigua.(1)

COLONEL EDWARD JONES, 25th December, 1729.

COLONEL HON. R. MURRAY, 13th May, 1733.

COLONEL GEORGE, 3RD DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH, 30th Mar., 1738. He resigned from the 38th to become Colonel of 1st Royal Dragoons, and in 1742 he became Colonel of the 2nd (Coldstream) Foot Guards. Brig.-General and commanded a Brigade of Foot Guards at the Battle of Dettingen in 1743, with distinction. Nominated in 1758 to command Expedition to the French Colonies, and the same year was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the British Forces serving in Germany under Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick. He died on the 28th October, 1758, at Munster in Westphalia. He was a grandson of the 1st Duke, who commanded the English Army in the Netherlands in 1704.

COLONEL R. DALZELL, 7th November, 1739.

COLONEL SHERRINGTON TALBOT, 5th February, 1747.

COLONEL RICHARD PHILLIPS, 13th March, 1750.

COLONEL ALEXANDER DUROURE, 27th February, 1751.

COLONEL SIR JAMES ROSS, BART., 26th May, 1756.

COLONEL DAVID WATSON, 12th October, 1761.

COLONEL CADWALLADER, LORD BLAYNEY, 24th November, 1776. Lieut.-General, May 25th, 1772, in the Army. Appointed Colonel of 38th 24th November, 1776. Died 21st November, 1782.

SIR ROBERT PIGOT, BART., 25th May, 1772. Was Lieut.-Colonel for 10 years, and won high reputation with the 38th in the attack and capture of Guadaloupe and Martinique, and during the American War of Independence. He won such distinction when in command of the 38th at the Battle of Bunker's Hill that he was promoted Major-General and given the Colonelcy of the 38th on Lord Blayney's death. He died on 1st August, 1796.

LIEUT.-COLONEL HENRY FOX, third son of Lord Holland. Educated at Westminster, he exchanged from the King's Dragoon Guards and joined the 38th at Boston, during the American War of Independence. He served throughout this campaign. Captain, February, 1774; Major, 1777, and Lieut.-Colonel, 1778. He afterwards became Major-General and commanded a Brigade in the Flanders campaign of 1793. Became Lieut.-General in 1799; Lieut.-Governor of Gibraltar, 1804, and was appointed to the command of the Army in Sicily, 1808. He died 18th July, 1811.

LIEUT.-COLONEL SPENCER THOMAS VASSALL, 1802. He served with the 38th in the West Indies, and on the Regiment's return to Ireland in 1803, he raised the strength of the Regiment from a mere skeleton to a total of nearly 1,200 all ranks. He commanded the Regiment during Sir David Baird's Expedition to the Cape of Good Hope,

(1) Dalton. George I.'s Army. Vol. 1, p. 174.

Digitized by Google

and was with it at Saldanha Bay. He took it out to South America, and fell, mortally wounded, in the attack on Monte Video in 1806.

LIEUT.-COLONEL JOHN NUGENT, 1806. As Senior Major, he assumed command of the 38th after Colonel Vassall's death, and commanded it in the attack on Buenos Ayres. He was given command of the newly-raised 2nd Battalion of the 38th, and took them out to Portugal in 1810. He served throughout the Peninsular War, and on the disbandment of the 2nd Battalion in 1814, he succeeded Sir Charles Greville in the command of the 1st Battalion, 38th, on that Officer's promotion to command of a Brigade. He retired in 1815.

LIEUT.-COLONEL SIR CHARLES GREVILLE, 1812. Joined the 10th Regiment (Lincolns) as Ensign in 1796; Lieutenant by purchase, 1797; Captain, 1799. On the Staff of Marquis of Wellesley at Calcutta. Served with his Regiment, under Sir David Baird, in desert march to Cairo. Purchased majority in the 38th, 1802, and Lieut.-Colonel in 1805. He succeeded on the death of Lieut.-Colonel Vassall, and took command of the 38th on its return from South America in 1807. He served with the 38th throughout the Peninsular War, at Corunna, Walcheren, and Salamanca. He commanded a Brigade at the siege of St. Sebastian and the Battle of the Nive. Colonel, 4th June, 1813; Major-General, 1819. Died in London 2nd December, 1836. K.C.B.

LIEUT.-COLONEL MILES, 1815. He commanded the 38th during the occupation of Paris in 1815. Home Service, England and Ireland, 1815-1818. Took them out to the Cape in 1818, and retired in 1822.

LIEUT.-COLONEL SIR ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL, 1822. Took the 38th from South Africa to India, 1822, and retired on his appointment to command the Forces in the first Burmese War.

LIEUT.-COLONEL FRITH, 1824. Commanded the 38th throughout the first Burmese War. Was wounded at the capture of Malloon. He died in India, 1831.

LIEUT.-COLONEL HUGH PIPER, 1831. He assumed command of the 38th on the death of Colonel Frith. His service with the 38th extended over forty years, during which period he had served with it in Europe, Asia, Australia, and America. He served with it throughout the first Burmese War, and brought the Regiment home in 1836. He commanded it while on Home Service in Ireland, and in the Ionian Islands, retiring in 1840.

LIEUT.-COLONEL SIR JOHN CAMPBELL, BART., 1840. He joined the Regiment in 1821, and was A.D.C. to his father, General Sir Archibald Campbell, Bart., throughout the first Burmese War. At the outbreak of the Crimean War in 1854, he was given the command of a Brigade. He rendered good service at the battles of the Alma and Inkerman, and was promoted Major-General for distinguished service. He was killed in the attack on the Redan on June 18th, 1855.

LIEUT.-COLONEL JOHN JACKSON LOUTH, C.B., A.D.C. to H.M. Queen Victoria. Joined the 38th in 1824, and was present with it during the first Burmese War. Captain, 1836; Major, 1840; Lieut.-Colonel, 1843. He commanded the Regiment during the Crimean War, and won distinction at Alma and Inkerman, and at the attack on the Cemetery on June 18th, 1855, where he was twice wounded. He was invalided home, and died on his arrival at Portsmouth on July 28th, 1855. C.B. and A.D.C. to H.M. Queen Victoria.

Digitized by Google

LIEUT.-COLONEL JAMES PATTOUN SPARKS, C.B. He joined the 38th as Lieutenant, after three years' service in the Royal African Corps, where he had served in the Kaffir fighting of 1846. He served with the 38th throughout the Crimean War, excepting three months in 1855, when he was home on duty. He returned to the Crimea, and was present at the attack on the Redan; and succeeded to the command of the Regiment on the morning of June 18th, when Lieut.-Colonel J. J. Louth was seriously wounded. He was the senior unwounded Officer of the 2nd Brigade, 3rd Division, at the close of this action. On his promotion to Major-General, he was appointed Hon. Colonel of the 38th, and died on September 7th, 1881, aged 82.

LIEUT.-COLONEL JOSEPH SAMUEL ADAMSON, 1855. He joined the 38th as Captain, 1838, and was Senior Captain during its service in the Crimean War. Major, December, 1854; Lieut.-Colonel, June, 1855, and retired on full pay in 1856. He was present at the Alma, the siege of Sevastopol, and commanded the second parallel of the left attack during its construction, when an attack by the Russians was repulsed. He was Major of the Regiment for 10 months of the Crimean War.

LIEUT.-COLONEL JOHN WILLIAM SIDNEY SMITH, 1855. Joined the 38th as Ensign in 1832. Captain in 1854; Major, 29th December, 1854; Lieut.-Colonel, July, 1855. In 1848, he commanded a detachment of the Regiment in co-operation with a Naval Expedition, under Captain Loch, in the ascent in boats of the River St. Juan de Nicaragua, Central America, and was at the assault and capture of the Fort of Serapigni, and the surrender of the Forts of Castella Viego and St. Carlos. He also accompanied Captain Loch to the town of Grenada, and was present at the deliberations and conclusions of a Treaty with the Nicaraguan Commissioners. He served with the Regiment in the Crimean War, 1854-55, including the battles of Alma and Inkerman, siege of Sevastopol, and the capture and occupation of the Cemetery and suburbs on 15th June. He was Senior Officer of the 38th at the close of the War, and was promoted Lieut.-Colonel on the death of Colonel J. J. Louth. (Medal, with 3 clasps; Knight of the Legion of Honour; 4th Class of the Medjidie Turkish Medal, and C.B.) At the close of the War, he accepted the command of a Depôt Battalion. Attained the rank of General, and was appointed Hon. Colonel of the Regiment 25th January, 1897.

LIEUT.-COLONEL THOMAS CONYNGHAM KELLY, C.B., 1857. He had served for nearly thirty years in the 31st Regiment, with which he served during the Crimean War, before he was appointed Lieut.-Colonel of the 38th in July, 1857. He served with distinction during the Indian Mutiny, part of the time in command of the Regiment, and partly as Brigadier. He exchanged in February, 1859, to the 47th Regiment, became Lieut.-General, and died in 1887.

LIEUT.-COLONEL WILLIAM O'GRADY HALY, C.B., 1859. This Officer served with distinction in the 47th Regiment during the Crimean War, and exchanged to the 38th in February, 1859. He commanded the Regiment until January, 1865, when he was promoted Major-General. Later, as Sir William O'G. Haly, he was Commander-in-Chief of the Forces in Canada, where he died.

LIEUT.-COLONEL FREDERICK ARTHUR WILLIS, C.B., 1863. This Officer served during the Indian Mutiny with the 84th Regiment, and joined the 38th as Major in September, 1860. He was promoted Lieut.-Colonel in December, 1863, and commanded the Regiment until May, 1871, when he exchanged to the 26th Regiment.

Digitized by Google

LIEUT.-COLONEL SHURLOCK HENNING, C.B., exchanged from the 26th Regiment, and commanded the 38th from May, 1871, to September, 1877. While the Regiment was in Manchester, he issued, for recruiting purposes, an illuminated sheet giving the Record of the 38th as a Regimental Souvenir.

LIEUT.-COLONEL WILLIAM KIDSTON ELLES, 1877. Ensign in June, 1854. Served with the 38th during the Crimean War and Indian Mutiny. He took over the command in September, 1877, only to retire in July, 1878, on appointment as Assistant Adjutant-General at the Horse Guards. Eventually he became a Lieut.-General, and died while on the active list.

LIEUT.-COLONEL WILLIAM DE WILTON ROCHE THACKWELL, 1878. Second son of General Sir Joseph Thackwell, G.C.B. He served with the 39th Regiment at the siege and fall of Sevastopol, and in April, 1859, he exchanged as Captain to the 38th Regiment. He commanded the Regiment from July, 1878, to 1882. During the Egyptian War of 1882, he took part in the attack and occupation of the Ramleh Isthmus, and in the reconnaissance from Alexandria to Mahalla, afterwards acting as Brig.-General in command of the Ramleh Field Force. Mentioned in despatches, and received the 3rd Class Medjidie Medal and Bronze Star. He subsequently commanded a Regimental District. Hon. Major-General. C.B. Died 190—

LIEUT.-COLONEL PHILIP HOMAN EYRE, 1882. An Irishman of good family, the Eyres of Eyre Court, Co. Galway. Enlisted in the 38th in 1850, and in August, 1854, was promoted from Sergeant to Ensign. He served with the Regiment before Sevastopol and through the Indian Mutiny. Was Adjutant for four years; Captain, 1862; Major, 1876; Lieut.-Colonel, 1881. He commanded the Regiment from 1882 until he was killed at its head at Kirbekan in the River Campaign in Egypt. Mentioned in despatches.

LIEUT.-COLONEL SIR NORMAN WILLIAM DRUMMOND PRINGLE, BART., 1885. He joined the 38th as Ensign in September, 1858; Captain, 1863, and served in the Egyptian Campaign of 1882. He commanded the 1st Battalion from February, 1885, to November, 1888, and died in 1897.

LIEUT.-COLONEL ALLAN SAUNDERS, 1888. This Officer joined the 80th Regiment as Ensign in 1841. He was Adjutant for five years. He served in the Bhootan and South Africa campaigns, and commanded the 1st Battalion from November, 1881, until February, 1891.

LIEUT.-COLONEL WILLIAM GODFREY THOMAS, 1891. Had some years' service with the 25th and Manchester Regiments. He was brought in from half-pay to command the 1st Battalion, and after holding this command for four years was appointed Assistant Adjutant-General in India, where he died in January, 1896.

LIEUT.-COLONEL ARCHIBALD BORTHWICK HORSBRUGH, 1895. He joined the 80th as 2nd Lieut. in February, 1874, and served with the Regiment in the Perak Expedition in 1876, in the campaign against Sekukuni, and in the Egyptian campaign of 1882; also in the Nile Expedition, and was severely wounded at the Battle of Kirbekan. He commanded the 1st Battalion from October, 1895, to November, 1896.

LIEUT.-COLONEL HENRY CHARLES SAVAGE, 1896. Joined the 80th as Lieut. 13th June, 1874; Captain, 3rd February, 1882; Major, 23rd August, 1889; Lieut.-Colonel, 25th November, 1896. He served in

Digitized by Google

the Zulu War of 1878, including the operations against Sekukuni. (Medal, with clasp.) Commanded 1st Battalion, November, 1896, and took them out to South Africa for the Boer War. He was succeeded by Lieut.-Colonel H. A. Raitt, C.B.

LIEUT.-COLONEL HERBERT AVELING RAITT, C.B., 1901. Joined the 2nd Battalion as 2nd Lieut., 27th March, 1878; Lieut., 9th July, 1879; Captain, 26th January, 1884; Major, 12th February, 1896; Lieut.-Colonel, 1st January, 1901; Colonel, 10th February, 1904. He served with the Battalion in the Zulu War of 1878 (Medal and clasp), and was present at the operations against Sekukuni, at the capture of the Fighting Koppee. He was in command of a troop of the 3rd Mounted Rifles (Diamond Fields Horse) in the Bechuanaland Expedition, under Sir Charles Warren, and assumed command of the 1st Battalion during the Boer War in 1900-02, including the operations for the relief of Wepener, the fighting near Dewetsdorp and Thabanchu in April, 1900; the actions in the Wittenbergen which preceded the surrender of General Prinsloo's Army; and took part in the subsequent operations in the Orange River Colony. Mentioned in despatches. C.B. Queen's Medal, 3 clasps; King's Medal, 2 clasps. Brig.-General, commanding South Midland Division (T.F.), 1909-10. Major-General, 4th September, 1912. Great War, 1914-1918. K.C.I.E.

LIEUT.-COLONEL HARRY WARRY STEWARD, 1905. He joined the 1st Battalion as 2nd Lieut., 23rd October, 1880; became Lieut., 1st July, 1881; Captain, 7th December, 1887; Major, 1st January, 1898; Lieut.-Colonel, 1st January, 1905. He served in the operations with the Soudan Frontier Force in 1885-6. (Medal and Khedive's Star.) With the 1st Battalion in the South African War in 1900-02, including the operations for the relief of Wepener, the fighting near Dewetsdorp and Thabanchu in April, 1900, and in the actions in the Wittenberg which preceded the surrender of General Prinsloo's Army. He served as Provost-Marshal of the 17th Brigade from August to April, 1900; was employed in the Intelligence Department from May to October, 1901, and acted as Commandant of Ficksburg from October, 1901, to April, 1902. Mentioned in despatches. Brev.-Lieut.-Colonel, 29th November, 1900. He vacated the command at Devonport, 31st December, 1908.

LIEUT.-COLONEL JAMES WALKER SEARS, 1909. Lieut., 1st July, 1881; promoted Captain, 10th April, 1889; Major, 8th December, 1900; Lieut.-Colonel, 1st January, 1909. He served with the Battalion in the Egyptian War, 1882, and was present at the reconnaissance from Alexandria on 5th August. (Medal and Khedive's Star.) During the Indian rising in North-West Canada in 1885, he was on the Staff of the Battleford Column, and served throughout the campaign. He was present at the engagement at Cut Knife Hill, and commanded a Scout Corps in the pursuit of the Indian Chief, Big Bear. Three times mentioned in despatches, and received Medal and clasp. He served with the 1st Battalion in the South African War, 1900-01, and took part in the actions in the Wittenbergen which preceded the surrender of General Prinsloo's Army. He was also engaged in the subsequent operations in the Orange River Colony. Mentioned in despatches. He vacated the command in December, 1912.

LIEUT.-COLONEL ROBERT MONTGOMERY OVENS, C.M.G. Joined the 2nd Battalion as 2nd Lieut., 23rd March, 1889; Lieut., 25th June, 1890; Captain, 15th October, 1896; Adjutant, 1895-99; Major, 22nd January, 1907; Lieut.-Colonel, 1st January, 1913. Was D.A.A.G. for Musketry, India, from 23rd February, 1901, till 31st May, 1904. Brigade-Major, India, 1904-06. Commanded the Depôt at Lichfield from 1907 until 1910. Took over command of 1st Battalion in South Africa on 1st January, 1913. Brought the Regiment home in 1914, and

Digitized by Google

took it out to France on October 4th, 1914, where he commanded it until his appointment as Brig.-General, commanding 149th Infantry Brigade. Mentioned in despatches. C.M.G.

On its return from Italy, after a period of service at the Depôt, Lichfield, it left England for Singapore on November 17th, 1919, under the command of Lieut.-Colonel L. B. Boyd-Moss, C.M.G., D.S.O. It is now (1923) serving in Burmah, under the command of Lieut.-Colonel R. W. Morgan, C.M.G., D.S.O.

APPENDIX II.

Succession of Commanders of the 80th Foot (2nd Battalion, South Staffordshire Regiment).

LIEUT.-COLONEL LORD HENRY WILLIAM PAGET, 1793. Raised the Regiment at Chatham on 12th September, 1793, where the King's Own Staffordshire Militia was at that time embodied under the command of the Earl of Uxbridge, Lord Paget's father. This was Lord Paget's first Commission in the Army, and on its formation he took the 80th out to Flanders on the abortive Walcheren Expedition. Afterwards, he exchanged into a Hussar Regiment, and subsequently distinguished himself as a leader of cavalry during Sir John Moore's campaign. He won high reputation at the Battle of Waterloo, where he was wounded in the knee, necessitating the amputation of his right leg. He was created Marquis of Anglesey on 23rd June, 1815, and was granted the honours of K.G., G.C.B., G.C.H., K.M.T., K.S.G.

The Regiment was raised by Volunteers from the King's Own Staffordshire Militia, and took the title of "Staffordshire Volunteers."

LIEUT.-COLONEL FORBES CHAMPAGNI, 1794. Was Senior Major of the Regiment on its formation. Served with it in the Walcheren Expedition, and commanded it at the Isle de Dieu, 1796.

LIEUT.-COLONEL JOSIAH CHAMPAGNI, 1796. He was Second Major on its formation, and saw service with it in Flanders and Isle de Dieu. He succeeded his brother in the command on 8th April, 1796, and on the 12th took the 80th out to the Cape of Good Hope, and was present with the Regiment at the surrender of the Dutch ships in Saldanha Bay. Took them to India in 1797. He commanded the 80th on the Expedition to Egypt in 1801.

LIEUT.-COLONEL RAMSAY, 1802. He took seven Companies of the 80th to Egypt, and commanded them on the Desert March; and was succeeded in the command by Lieut.-Colonel Harness, who brought these seven Companies back to India in June, 1802.

Digitized by Google

LIEUT.-COLONEL FORBES, 1807. Commanded the 80th while in India from 1807 until 1813.

LIEUT.-COLONEL EDWARDS, 1813. He commanded the Regiment from 1813 until his death at Madras on 6th February, 1816. He was the sole surviving Officer of those appointed to the 80th on its formation in 1793, and had served with it for a period of twenty-three years.

LIEUT.-COLONEL G. D. PITT. He served with the 80th for nearly eighteen years, for fifteen of which he had commanded it. On his appointment as Inspecting Officer for the Leeds Recruiting District, on 19th March, 1837, he vacated the command.

LIEUT.-COLONEL NARBOROUGH BAKER, 1837. This Officer was with the 80th at the capture of the Isle of France in 1810, and as Senior Major took over the command when Colonel Pitt retired. He took out the first detachment of the 80th to New South Wales to act as Convict Guards; went with the Regiment to India, and retired in 1845.

LIEUT.-COLONEL THOMAS BUNBURY, C.B., 1845. This Officer served as Major in a Portuguese Regiment during the Peninsular War, from 1808 until the close of the War in 1814, and was severely wounded at the Battle of the Nive. He received the Peninsular Medal with five clasps. He joined the 80th as Captain by purchase, and succeeded to the command of it when Colonel N. Baker retired. He commanded the Regiment throughout the Sikh War; was present at Moodkee, where he was wounded; Ferozeshah, where his horse was shot under him, and at Sobraon, for which he received the C.B. He commanded a detachment of the 80th in New Zealand for four years, and took command of the troops when the transports "Briton" and "Runnymede" were wrecked on the Andaman Islands. He retired in 1850, after 43 years' service. His medals and decorations are preserved in a glazed case in the monument to the 80th in Lichfield Cathedral.

LIEUT.-COLONEL ROBERT BLUCHER WOOD, C.B., 1850. Originally in the 10th Hussars, he served through the Sikh War as A.D.C. and Military Secretary to Lord Hardinge, and was severely wounded at Ferozeshah: awarded the C.B. He was appointed Major in the 80th in 1844, and Lieut.-Colonel in 1845, and assumed command of the Regiment in 1850. Leaving the 80th in 1852, he was A.D.C. to Lord Hardinge when Commander-in-Chief, and afterwards D.A.G. in Ireland.

LIEUT.-COLONEL GEORGE HUTCHISON, 1852. This Officer exchanged from the 97th Regiment to the command of the 80th in April, 1852. He commanded the 80th throughout the second Burmese War, brought the Regiment home in 1854, served with it at the Cape of Good Hope, and during the Indian Mutiny, where he died from wounds received in May, 1859. His Military service was over forty-six years when he died.

LIEUT.-COLONEL SAMUEL TOLFREY CHRISTIE, C.B., 1859. (Son of Dr. Christie, M.D., Cheltenham.) Colonel of the 80th Regiment, which he served with through the Burmese War of 1852-53; present at the capture of Mataban, where he commanded the storming party; at the operations before Rangoon, on the 12th, 13th, and 14th of April; on the 14th, commanded the skirmishers in front of the light guns during the advance on Rangoon; and was with the storming party at the capture of the Great Dragon Pagoda. He was also present at the capture of Prome, and received the especial thanks of the Governor-General of India, in Council, for his services on this occasion; commanded the flank Companies of his Regiment at the affair of the

Digitized by Google

stockades on the heights opposite Prome, 11th November, 1852, and was also at the repulse of the night attack. Some Burmese idols are in Rugby School Library, presented by him. Medal; and Brevet-Lieut.-Colonel. He served in the Sepoy Rebellion in 1857-1858; commanded a moveable column in the Futtepore district during the siege of Lucknow; engaged with the enemy on the banks of the Jumna, March, 1858; also commanded a field force detached from the Commander-in-Chief during the latter part of the campaign in Oude; was wounded on the 23rd of December, 1858; and had a horse shot under him. Medal. Commander of the Bath.(1)

LIEUT.-COLONEL ROBERT HAWKES, 1865. Formerly in the 4th Regiment, he joined the 80th as Captain in 1847. Served as Brigade Major during second Burmese War and during the Indian Mutiny. He was promoted Lieut.-Colonel in May, 1859, and commanded the Regiment during 1865-66.

LIEUT.-COLONEL ROBERT PRESCOTT HARRISON, 1866. This Officer, after serving with the 37th Regiment during the Rebellion in Ceylon in 1848; after 1848, also served with it during the Indian Mutiny in 1857-58, including the night attack on Arrah, and several other actions. (Mentioned in despatches. Medal.) Became Major of the 63rd in 1858, and was promoted Lieut.-Colonel on half-pay in April, 1866. Shortly afterwards, he obtained command of the 80th, and commanded it for six years while at Home Stations. He retired in January, 1872, on the Regiment being moved from Ireland to Singapore.

LIEUT.-COLONEL HAMILTON CHARLES SMITH, 1872. He joined as Ensign in 1844, and served with the 80th through the Sikh War, the second Burmese War, and the Indian Mutiny, and with the Bhootan Expedition. He commanded the Regiment at Singapore and in China, retiring in May, 1877, with the rank of Hon. Major-General, and died within a few days of his retirement.

LIEUT.-COLONEL GEORGE HAMILTON TWEMLOW, 1877. After thirty-three years' service in the 64th, 7th, and 16th Regiments, he was promoted to half-pay Major in April, 1870, and the same year obtained command of the 80th, dying six months after taking over the command.

LIEUT.-COLONEL CHARLES FREDERICK AMIEL, 1877. This Officer, after over three years' service in the 3rd West Indian Regiment, was transferred to the 80th. He served with the Regiment throughout the second Burmese War, the Indian Mutiny, and the Bhootan Expedition, and was present with a detachment of the 80th in the Expedition to Perak. Brevet-Lieut.-Colonel. He succeeded to the command in November, 1877, and took the 80th out to South Africa. After serving through the earlier part of the Zulu War in 1878, he retired on full pay in July, 1879.

LIEUT.-COLONEL CHARLES TUCKER, C.B., 1879. He joined the 80th Regiment as Captain from the 22nd Regiment in November, 1860; Major, 9th December, 1872; Lieut.-Colonel, 9th July, 1879; Colonel, 9th July, 1883; Major-General, 13th October, 1893; Lieut.-General, 26th June, 1902. He served with the Bhootan Expedition, and at Perak, in 1865-66. (Medal with clasp.) He commanded the left attack against Sekukuni in 1878, and commanded the Regiment in the Column under Colonel Rowlands on the Swazi Border during the Zulu War. In the action on the Intombi River, and at the Battle of Ulundi. He also

(1) Naval and Military Records of Rugbeians, p. 61.

Digitized by Google

commanded the Regiment in Sir E. Wood's Column during the march through Zululand. Mentioned in despatches. Medal with clasp. C.B. He served in the South African War, 1899-1902, on the Staff as Lieut.-General, and also held the command of Pretoria and district till June 21st, 1901. Mentioned in despatches. Promoted Lieut.-General for distinguished services. Queen's Medal with 2 clasps, and King's Medal with 2 clasps. G.C.B., G.C.V.O. Lieut.-Colonel of 80th from 1879 to 1884. Appointed Colonel of the South Staffordshire Regiment, 11th September, 1911.

LIEUT.-COLONEL CHARLES AUGUSTUS FITZGERALD CREAGH, 1884. This Officer served with the 50th Regiment in the latter part of the Crimean War and in the New Zealand campaign. He joined the 80th in 1873, and was present with the Regiment in the Expedition to Perak, the Sekukuni campaign, and the Zulu War. He commanded the 2nd Battalion (80th) from July, 1884, until April, 1887, when he retired as Major-General.

LIEUT.-COLONEL JOHN WEBBER SMITH, 1887. He joined the 38th as Ensign in October, 1863, and served with it during the Nile campaign, and at Kirbekan in 1882. He commanded the 2nd Battalion from April, 1887, until February, 1891.

LIEUT.-COLONEL JOHN EDWARD HALE PRIOR, 1891. Joined the 80th as Ensign, 21st March, 1868; Lieut., 30th August, 1871; Captain, 18th November, 1877; Brev.-Major, 29th November, 1879; Major, 19th July, 1882; Lieut.-Colonel, 11th February, 1891. He served with a detachment of the 80th in the Perak Expedition in 1875-76. (Medal with clasp.) Proceeded on special service to South Africa at the commencement of the Zulu War in 1879, and was present with the Frontier Light Horse in the engagement at the Zloblane Mountain. He was Orderly Officer to Colonel R. Buller at the affair at the Upoko River, and was present at the engagement at Ulundi, and in the reconnaissance on the previous day. (Twice mentioned in despatches. Brev.-Major.) He served in the subsequent operations against Sekukuni as Staff and Orderly Officer to Colonel Harrison. Medal with clasp. He commanded the 2nd Battalion from 1891 to 1895, and in 1895 was appointed to the command of the Staffordshire Regimental District. Brig.-General, 1899. Died at Aldershot on the day of the inspection of his Brigade prior to its despatch to the Boer War.

LIEUT.-COLONEL WILLIAM MOORE, 1896. He joined the 80th as 2nd Lieut. in April, 1874, and served with the Regiment in the operations against Sekukuni in 1878, and throughout the Zulu War of 1879; part of the time as District Adjutant of the Transvaal. (Medal with clasp.) He served with the 1st Battalion in the Egyptian War of 1882, and was present at the reconnaissance in force from Alexandria on 5th August. (Medal and Khedive's Star.) He served in the Nile Expedition in 1884-85 with the 1st Battalion, and took part in the operations under Major-General Earle, including the action of Kirbekan. Captain, 4th October, 1882; Major, 18th November, 1888; Lieut.-Colonel, 16th October, 1895. He commanded the 2nd Battalion from October, 1896, until 1900.

LIEUT.-COLONEL NEWTON SEYMOUR ALLEN, 1900. Joined the 38th as 2nd Lieut., 6th October, 1875. Lieutenant, 6th October, 1876; Captain, 31st October, 1883; Major, 27th June, 1894; Second-in-Command of 1st Battalion, 15th November, 1896; Lieut.-Colonel, 2nd Battalion, 16th October, 1899. He served with the 1st Battalion in the Egyptian War of 1882, and was present at the reconnaissance in force from Alexandria. (Medal and Khedive's Star.) With the Nile

Digitized by Google

Expedition of 1884-85, and was present at the Battle of Kirbekan. (Medal with two clasps.)

LIEUT.-COLONEL EDWARD KAYE DAUBENEY, C.B.E., D.S.O., 1904. He joined the 80th as 2nd Lieut., 11th May, 1878; Lieut., 1st December, 1880; Captain, 7th August, 1886; Major, 18th November, 1896; Lieut.-Colonel, 16th September, 1903. He served with the 80th Regiment in the left attack against Sekukuni in 1878; was in the Column under Colonel Rowlands on the Swazi Border, 1879; and served during the invasion of Zululand and in the engagement at Ulundi. (Medal with clasp.) He also took part in the Nile Expedition in 1884-5. (Medal with clasp and Khedive's Star.) He served with the Egyptian Frontier Field Force in 1885-86, as Aide-de-Camp to Brig.-General Butler, commanding 1st Brigade, and was present at the engagement at Giniss. Mentioned in despatches. D.S.O. The Great War, 1914-18. C.B.E.

LIEUT.-COLONEL IVONE KIRKPATRICK, C.B.E., 1908. Joined the 80th as 2nd Lieutenant, 25th October, 1880. Lieutenant, 1st July, 1881; Captain, 5th May, 1888; Major, 16th October, 1899; Lieut.-Colonel, 14th October, 1907. He served with the 1st Battalion in the Nile Expedition of 1884-85, and was present at the Battle of Kirbekan. (Medal with two clasps and Khedive's Star.) The Great War, 1914-1918. C.B.E.

LIEUT.-COLONEL CHARLES STEER DAVIDSON, C.B., 1911. Joined the 80th as 2nd Lieut. from the Lincolnshire Militia on May 16th, 1888; Captain, 15th October, 1896; Brev.-Major, 22nd August, 1902; Major, 17th November, 1906; Lieut.-Colonel, 16th October, 1911. He served in the Boer War, 1900-02; on the Staff as A.D.C. to Major-General A. G. Wavell, C.B., commanding 15th Brigade, from January 13th, 1900, to January 2nd, 1901; was Staff Officer to a District Command, and was Adjutant to the 3rd Battalion from 21st January, 1901, to 31st March, 1905. He took part in the operations in the Orange Free State, 1900, including the actions at Karee Siding, Vet River (5th—6th May), and Zand River. He served during the operations in the Transvaal and Cape Colony; was again in Cape Colony, July, 1901, to May 31st, 1902. Twice mentioned in despatches, 10th September, 1901, and 31st October, 1901. (Brev.-Major.) Queen's Medal and 3 clasps, and King's Medal and 2 clasps. Took the 2nd Battalion out to France on 11th August, 1914. He commanded them until his appointment as Brig.-General in 1915. C.B.

Digitized by Google

APPENDIX III.

The Uniform of the Regiment.(1)

No direct evidence is available so far of the dress worn either by Officers or men of Lillingston's Regiment (later the 38th, and now the 1st Battalion, South Staffordshire Regiment) on its formation in 1705, or in fact until about 1742, when a series of coloured illustrations (including a private of the 38th) were prepared.

From contemporary paintings, engravings, and the Blenheim tapestries, however, it is clear that the uniform would not differ very greatly from that worn in 1742.

The coloured drawing of a private of the 38th (see coloured frontispiece) was made about 1742, following the Order issued to the Adjutant-General in 1740 that "an exact account of the livery given to each regiment which may have fallen under your observation" should be transmitted to Mr. Robert Arnold for His Majesty's private inspection.(2)

This drawing is the first evidence of the yellow facings which were worn by the 38th until the change in 1881 to white.

The clothing warrants of 1743, 1747, and 1751, which describe the distinctions of dress of Sergeants, Officers, Drummers, etc., are well-known and need not be referred to except to remark that they further confirm the fact that the facings were yellow.

The painting at Windsor Castle of a Grenadier of the 38th (painted by the Swiss artist, David Morier) shows that some minor alterations had taken place in the dress of the Regiment. The coat has now wide yellow lapels (as ordered on 17th November, 1749), and is laced with regimental pattern lace (white with a central yellow stripe between two green ones). The Royal Cypher on the front of the Grenadier's cloth cap is also green.

In 1752, Ross's Regiment (the 38th), while serving in the West Indies, was permitted to wear linen linings to the coats instead of cloth.

The uniform underwent the same changes as were ordered for all other Infantry Regiments, about 1768, which were described in detail in the warrant of June, 1768.

The General Officer who inspected the Regiment this year describes the Officers' uniform as follows :—

"COATS.—Scarlet, with silver-embroidered button-holes, lappelled to the waist with yellow. Yellow cape (*i.e.* collar). Slashed sleeve, with a small yellow cuff. Silver buttons numbered. Silver epaulette. White lining, waistcoat and breeches. Silver laced hats.

"MEN.—Young. Have black gaiters, with black garters and stiff leather tops.

---

(1) Contributed by Lionel E. Buckell.
(2) General Officers' Letter Book. Vol. 358. 4/3/1739/40.

Digitized by Google

"CLOTHING.—According to regulation.

"Grenadier caps, edged with fur.

"Hath a band of musick."

This report brings out a feature which frequently appears in reports on the dress of the 38th. The statement that the clothing was "according to regulation" was frequently repeated and confirmed by independent testimony, in contrast to the practice in many regiments where patterns and articles not according to regulation were introduced, to the disadvantage of the pockets of both Officers and men.

The lace on the soldiers' coats was ordered by the 1768 warrant to be white, with a yellow stripe between two red stripes.

A Grenadier of the 38th, dressed in accordance with this warrant, is shown in the series of coloured prints of Infantry Grenadiers published in 1768, of which a copy (the only copy known) is in the Prince Consort's Library belonging to the Aldershot Military Society. This print shows that the 38th had the lace loops on the coats of the distinctive shape known as "bastion," or flower pot, and that these were spaced at regular distances on lapels and cuffs (a feature retained until the introduction of the tunic).

An Order of 1782 confirmed that the bayonet belt (which had until recently been worn round the waist) should be worn over the right shoulder. The metal clasp of the waistbelt became the forerunner of the breast plate, which later became, for both Officers and men, one of the principal means of distinguishing regiments, as it bore the regimental badges, honours, and distinctions, as well as the number.

Some pewter and silver buttons worn by soldiers and Officers of the 38th in America, between 1776 and 1782, were found in 1910 during excavations at 181st Street,(1) on the site occupied about 1782 by Fort Washington. The Staffordshire Knot was not yet shown.

In 1782, Infantry Regiments were given territorial titles and ordered to associate themselves closely with the territorial district whose name they bore. The 38th became the "1st Staffordshire," and began to use the Staffordshire Knot (which was not officially authorised until 1881) shortly afterwards. It cannot be traced on any of the appointments of the Regiment prior to 1782.

The Officers' breast plate before 1800 was a plain silver oval plate, with the numeral 38 in the centre, with a crown above and the Staffordshire Knot below, all in gilt.(2)

The Officers' silver-embroidered button-holes were replaced before the beginning of the 19th Century by plain yellow twist loops.

The 80th Regiment (or "Staffordshire Volunteers") was raised by Lord Paget at the end of 1793, largely by Volunteers from the Staffordshire Militia, whose uniform (red, faced yellow, with gilt buttons bearing the Staffordshire Knot) appears to have been closely copied.

The uniform of the 80th was, from its formation, very similar to that of the 38th, the chief differences being in the Officers' buttons (which were gilt instead of silver) and the private soldier's lace, which was

(1) Reported by the courtesy of W. G. Culver, Esq., of New York.
(2) This is figured in "Regimental Badges" by E. Almack, and appears (with a bugle replacing the Crown) in the well-known engraved portrait of Captain Robert Barclay, who left the Regiment in 1804.

Digitized by Google

white, with a red between two black stripes, the loops being straight, with pointed ends and arranged in pairs.

The Officers' shoulder belt plate (certainly worn in 1800, and probably from the formation of the Regiment) of the 80th was a silver oval, with a gilt raised rim, having the numeral 80 surmounted by the Staffordshire Knot in the centre, surrounded by a circle inscribed "G.R. Staffordshire Volunteers," the circle surmounted by a crown.(1) All the ornaments raised and gilt.

In 1796, a white ostrich feather was worn in the hats, according to Captain Elers, who said the uniforms of the 12th and 80th Regiments were exactly alike but for this distinction.

In 1800, the introduction of the tall cylindrical chaco involved the design of new plates for the 38th and 80th. These were ordered to be of the universal pattern, with the numerals (38 and 80 respectively) engraved at the bottom on each side of the lion.

The portrait of Captain Robert Barclay referred to above shows that the 38th were now wearing 2 buttons and loops on each end of the collar, instead of the single button and loop worn by most regiments; this peculiarity was retained until 1829, when two loops became regulation for all Officers of Infantry.

In 1800, the Officers of the 38th adopted a breast plate differing slightly from that previously described. The new plate had all the mounts in silver, and had round the numeral in the centre a garter inscribed "Staffordshire Regiment."

Colonel de Bosset's diagrams in his "A View of the British Army, etc.," published in 1803, confirms that both 38th and 80th had yellow facings, the former with silver buttons and lace, the latter with gilt, and that the privates' lace loops, as to colour and shape, were as previously described, although the similar chart by Lieut.-Colonel Hamilton Smith, which appeared in 1812, showed that the two red stripes in the privates' lace of the 38th had disappeared, leaving one yellow stripe only. Otherwise Colonel Smith's chart is identical with de Bosset's.

In 1811, a new pattern of cap was ordered for both rank and file and for Officers (who had till now continued to wear the cocked hat), with a metal plate in front of almost universal design. That worn by the 38th and 80th was very plain, with the numeral below the double G.R. cypher with crown above cypher. This cap (with its high front like a big peak turned up) was replaced by the wide-topped chaco by an Order of 15th August, 1815.

This was, with small modifications as to height, diameter, and ornamentation, to remain the head-dress of the British Infantry for some 28 years, or thereabouts.

Illustration No. 1 shows the plate (gilt, with silver mounts) worn by the Officers of the 80th about 1820.(2) The first plate worn by the 80th was similar, but was oval-shaped, nearly 4 inches high by 2¼ inches wide, while the plate illustrated was circular, 2¼ inches in diameter.(3)

The Sphinx (awarded as a special badge to the 80th for their services in Egypt in 1801) appears on this badge for the first time, but was

(1) Memoirs of Geo. Elers, 1777-1842, by Lord M. G. Leveson-Gower.
(2) See plate 17. From the Collection of A. R. Cattley, Esq.
(3) These and many other particulars of Officers' metal badges are from the books of Messrs. Jennens, without whose freely-given assistance it is difficult, if not impossible, to describe the badges worn by any Regiment throughout its history.

Digitized by Google



Fig. 1.

Fig. 2.

Fig. 3.

Fig. 4.

Fig. 5.

Fig. 6.

Photo. *J. P. Jones.*

REGIMENTAL BADGES.
(See Chapter on Uniform.)

PLATE 17. *To face p. 440.*

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

afterwards displayed on nearly all the appointments of the 80th, even in some cases in preference to the Knot.

The 38th had a similar plate a little larger (2¾ inches diameter), with Roman numerals XXXVIII. in the centre, surrounded by a wreath of palms and with a scroll above the numeral inscribed "PENINSULA."

The privates had a plain numeral on a plate, similar as to shape, but all of brass.

The Officers' caps had a band of lace round the top and bottom (silver for the 38th, gold for the 80th), and silver or gilt chin scales, with a red and white feather plume.

The cocked hat (which had continued as an article of wear by Officers in Court dress) was finally abolished by General Order of 20th June, 1816.

In 1816, we have the description of full-dress coats made for Lieut. Strutch and for Lieut. Cooke (of the Light Company), both of the 38th.(1)

The former had soft ochre yellow sloping collar about 3 inches high, yellow round cuffs, and straight lapels. The collar had two yellow cord loops at each end, with small silver buttons at the inner ends, 10 similar loops and buttons arranged by pairs down each lapel, and four loops and buttons (also in pairs) on each cuff. The coat was of scarlet cloth, with a scarlet three-pointed flap covering a pocket on each side of the back in line with the waist, with 4 crimson loops (also by pairs) on each flap, and silver buttons to correspond with the loops showing below each flap. A full skirt, with white turnbacks, and, for ornament, at the bottom of each skirt stars embroidered in silver on scarlet cloth, with gold Staffordshire Knot on scarlet circle in centre of each. Two loops of crimson cord horizontally at the waist behind connected 2 silver buttons, and 2 more were on each skirt about half-way down in a pleat.

The collar, cuffs, pocket flaps, etc., were all edged with a narrow white piping (an unusual feature retained by the 38th until the adoption of tunics in 1856).

Blue, and Russian Drill, trousers were supplied.

The epaulette straps were 2¼ inches wide, made of plain pattern silver lace, with octagonal top with small button; the crescent was corded and from it hung two rows of silver bullions.

The Grenadier and Light Companies wore scarlet cloth wings, laced round with 1 inch silver lace, fringed round the outer edge with short silver bullions, and with straps similar to those of the Battalion Company Officers' epaulettes. The epaulettes had only the crowns and stars distinguishing the rank of the wearer on the straps, but Flank Company Officers' wings had silver stars with gold knots at the end of the straps, with small gold-embroidered grenades, or bugles, above, and the motto "1st Staffordshire" in gold letters on silver lace.

The grenade, or bugle (in silver) was worn as skirt ornament by Flank Company Officers instead of the star described above.(2)

(1) These particulars are taken from the pattern book used at this date by Messrs. Buckmaster (the military tailors), which is now in the possession of P. W. Reynolds, Esq., who kindly provided these and other interesting particulars.

(2) These and other details as to lace and embroidery were obtained by the courtesy of C. Dunsmore, Esq., of New York, from the book (now in the New York City Library), in which the late S. M. Milne, of Calverley, near Leeds, collected notes extracted from old lacemakers' books.

Digitized by Google

Buckmaster's book also describes the dress of the Officers of the 80th, which was very similar to that of the 38th, except that there was only one loop and button at each end of the collar, and there was no white piping anywhere. The buttons were gilt, and the epaulettes, wings, and skirt ornaments (all of gold lace or embroidery) differed in pattern. The epaulettes had plain gold lace straps (of "French check" pattern), with gold-embroidered crescents and bullions. The wings, of scarlet cloth, had 2 rows of gilt curb chain, edged round and between the chains with gold bullion, and had a silver plate in the centre, with a silver grenade (or bugle) surrounded by a silver laurel wreath.

The skirt ornaments worn by Battalion Officers were circular, of red cloth, surrounded by a yellow circle, on which was the motto "Staffordshire Volunteers" in silver. A gold-embroidered Knot was on the scarlet centre.

The Flank Company Officers wore the same ornaments, with small silver grenades (or bugles) in the centre.

Light blue trousers are described, and scarlet shell jackets (for undress), with yellow collars and pointed cuffs, with red loops on the shoulders and 11 gilt buttons down the front. (Shell jackets were not yet regulation, but were frequently worn in hot climates, and were no doubt imported when the 80th came home in 1817).

Actual specimens of the facings for the above-described coats remain in the book, and confirm that the two Regiments wore identically the same colour.

In 1819, a book of diagrams of Officers' uniforms by a Mr. Marward, of the Adjutant-General's Office, appeared. The diagrams of the 38th and 80th uniform confirm the details already given. The pigment used for colouring the facings is a very pale lemon yellow (much paler, in fact, than the actual specimens in Buckmaster's book).

In 1820, a new shoulder belt plate was adopted by the 38th to enable some of the numerous Peninsula honours awarded to the Regiment to be displayed; probably similar to the one described and illustrated for 1831, but all silver.

The "Dress Regulations for Officers of the Army" issued on the 1st January, 1822, describe in detail the uniform of Infantry Officers in all orders of dress. By these regulations a plain blue single-breasted greatcoat was introduced for undress. This necessitated the wearing of the sword in a waist-belt, so a plain black waist-belt was ordered, with a small circular locket clasp.(1) The centre of the clasp (which was of gilt, with silver mounts) had the Knot with the numerals "38" or "80" respectively above. The plates of the two Regiments were very similar, that of the 80th being a little larger and plainer than that of the 38th. Neither had any inscription.

In 1828, we find that the Officers of the 38th (contrary to the regulations) were wearing 1¾ inch silver lace stripes down the sides of their blue grey dress trousers, while the 80th were wearing gold lace nearly 2 inches wide. Both Regiments had apparently been wearing lace on the dress trousers for some time, as in each case the wide lace is described as replacing a narrower lace previously worn (silver 1 inch wide, with a crimson stripe in the centre, for the 38th; gold lace, ¾ inch wide, for the 80th).

The shoulder belt plate shown in illustration 2(2) had been introduced about 1826. It was worn practically unchanged until 1855, when the

(1) By Horse Guards Memo., 30th August, 1823.
(2) See plate 17.

Digitized by Google

shoulder belt for the Officer's sword was replaced by a waistbelt, with slings. It was always gilt, with silver mounts.(1)

The Field Officers at this time wore their swords in buff leather waistbelts, with rectangular clasps (gilt), with devices in silver similar to those on the breast plate, but put on long ways. A silver-embroidered Sphinx, together with a laurel wreath, was added at the bottom of the skirt ornaments on the coats of the Officers of the 80th.

A portrait of the Captain of the Grenadier Company of the 80th, in the possession of Lieut.-Colonel Savage, shows well the uniform of a Flank Company Officer at this time. The red coatee is shown buttoned right across (not showing the yellow lapels), as was often done by Flank Company Officers. The wings, of special Regimental pattern, come out well. The Flank Company sash, with bell rope ends, is also well shown, and the newly-introduced shoulder belt plate.

In 1831, new dress regulations were issued, making many alterations in the dress of Infantry Officers (or rather confirming many made between 1829 and 1831), and a book with coloured diagrams was published by G. M. Cowell, of Covent Garden. This book confirms that the facings of both Regiments were still yellow, and, as the 38th now had gold lace, the Officers' uniforms were very similar, the principal difference being that the 38th still retained the narrow white piping down front of coat, and round pocket flaps, cuffs, etc.

The new chaco introduced for Officers and men in 1829(2) involved the introduction of new plates, and the opportunity was taken to display on these the Peninsula and other honours. The plate worn by the Officers of the 38th was a large gilt star and crown of universal pattern, with a smaller silver facetted star mounted thereon, on centre of which was a gilt mount consisting of the numeral 38 above a Knot, with laurel spray on left and palm spray on right, the 38 and Knot appearing on a burnished silver disc. Four silver scrolls with the battle honours "Montevideo," "Salamanca," "St. Sebastian," and "Peninsular" were mounted on the silver star, two above and two below the gilt centre ornament, and a further small silver scroll appeared with "Ava" just above the 38.

The 80th Officers had also a silver star on the gilt universal star and crown, with a gilt Sphinx mounted thereon, 80, and Knot with silver laurel wreath round, all practically identical with those on the 1826 breast plate (illustration 2), except that Sphinx, 80, and Knot were gilt instead of silver. The Battalion Company privates, as of the 38th, had plain brass crowned stars, with numeral 80 or 38 in the centre.

The Officers of both 38th and 80th had to adopt new lace for the new pattern double-breasted coatees introduced in 1829. Both Colonels adopted an almost identical pattern, very plain, known as vellum, ½ inch wide. This was silver in the 38th until 1831, when they, in common with the rest of the Regiments wearing silver lace, changed it for gold, in accordance with King William IV.'s orders.(3) The 80th had gold lace at once. This pattern of lace was retained by both Regiments until, in 1881, the universal rose pattern was introduced for Officers of English Line Regiments.

The special regimental patterns of epaulettes and wings were now done away with and universal patterns substituted.

---

(1) From the Collection of Lieut.-Colonel M. B. Savage, C.B.E., D.S.O., Commanding 2nd Battalion, South Staffordshire Regiment. See plate 17.
(2) By Horse Guards Memo., 22/12/1828.
(3) Horse Guards Order, 2nd August, 1830.

Digitized by Google

In 1831, a new breast plate was worn by the Officers of the 38th. This is shown in illustration 3, which is from a photograph of a specimen in the Officers' Mess of the 1st Battalion, South Staffs. The plate is burnished gilt, with silver mounts. A little later, "NIVE" was added on the curl between the top two scrolls, and "AVA" in a corresponding position at the bottom.

The 38th Officers adopted new skirt ornaments with the introduction of gold lace, these consisting of gold-embroidered stars on scarlet cloth, with a gold-embroidered Knot on scarlet in the centre. These were worn until 1840, when a blue garter was added round the Knot, with the motto, *Honi soit qui mal y pense*, in gold letters.

In 1832, Field Officers, who had reverted to shoulder belts for their swords, were again ordered to substitute buff waist-belts, 1¼ inches wide, with plain gilt rectangular clasps, bearing, in silver, the Royal Cypher and Crown, with the numerals 38 or 80 respectively below the Cypher. These were worn unchanged until 1855, except that in 1845 the 38th substituted the Knot for the 38.

In 1834, the Officers of the 38th adopted new chaco plates and breast plates, which, as will be seen by illustration 4 (see plate), had practically the same device mounted on the universal gilt chaco plate, and burnished gilt breast plate respectively; 12 battle honours were now displayed. The star was silver, diamond cut, with all mounts gilt, the XXXVIII. appearing on a burnished silver centre.(1)

In 1836, by General Order,(2) the lace with coloured stripes, worn by rank and file, was replaced by plain white tape lace, but the 38th were to continue to wear bastion-shaped loops evenly spaced, while the 80th were to continue to wear straight loops with pointed ends, by pairs.

The drummers, however, continued to wear their regimental patterns, which were not replaced by the universal pattern, now worn, until 1866. The 38th had white lace, with a yellow stripe at each edge, and alternate diagonal bars of red and white in the centre; the 80th having a very distinctive pattern, consisting of chevrons of red, black and white.

In 1839, the rank and file got new brass chaco plates (shown in illustrations 5 and 6),(3) which are taken from specimens owned by the Officers, 1st South Staffs., and from the Collection of G. W. Snook, Esq., of Southsea.

The introduction of the new Albert chaco in 1844 involved the adoption of new chaco plates by Officers of 38th and 80th. That worn by the 80th is shown in illustration 7(4) from a specimen owned by Lieut.-Colonel Savage). It is all gilt, in accordance with the regulations. The plate of the 38th was very similar, having the numeral 38 instead of 80, and having the battle honours "Corunna," "Busaco," "Badajos," "Nive," "St. Sebastian," "Vittoria," and "Salamanca" on the principal rays of the star, and "Monte Video," "Roleia," "Peninsula," "Ava," Vimiera" on scrolls on the laurel wreath. The title round oval garter read: "1st Staffordshire."

In the 38th (as in many other Regiments) the Officers of the Flank Companies had distinctive chaco plates, a grenade, or bugle, replacing the oval garter, the plate otherwise remaining the same.

---

(1) From the Collection of J. B. Nightingale, Esq., Guernsey. See plate 17.
(2) Horse Guards Circular Memo., 6/7/1836.
(3) Figs. 1 to 6 on plate 17.
(4) See plate 18.

Digitized by Google



Fig.7.



Fig.8.



Fig.9.



Fig.10.



Fig.11.



Fig.12.

Photo. *J. P. Jones.*

REGIMENTAL BADGES.
(See Chapter on Uniform.)

PLATE 18. *To face p. 444.*

UNIV. OF MICH.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

In 1847, the Officers of the 38th were wearing on the forage cap (of the blue cloth pattern, with black band, introduced in 1834) a gold-embroidered Knot surrounded by laurel wreath, instead of the "numeral 1½ inches high" prescribed by regulation.

In 1850, the shoulder belt for bayonet, worn by the rank and file since about 1775, was replaced by a waist-belt with frog. This had a circular locket clasp with the title of the Regiment round the outer circle and the numeral 38 over the Knot for the 38th, and the plain numeral 80 for the 80th, the whole in brass. A little earlier (1848) the imitation pocket flaps (with buttons and loops of lace) on the skirts had been taken off.

The writer has seen a coatee worn by a Light Company Officer of the 38th at this period. It agrees entirely with the regulations, having collar and cuffs of pale yellow cloth, the former with 2 bars of gold vellum lace with scalloped edges at each end. The cuffs have 3 pointed scarlet flaps, almost covered with 4 loops of the same lace, and with 4 gilt buttons of the pattern worn so long by the 38th, viz. :— Smooth gilt, having an embossed Crown above the numeral 38, and the Knot at the bottom. The white edging down front of coat and round cuff flap is there. The skirt ornaments are gold-embroidered bugles. (Flank Company Officers wore bugles, or grenades) instead of the wreath, etc.)

A coloured print was published by Messrs. Ackermann in 1853, showing the uniform at that date. The blue grey Summer trousers, introduced in 1845, are shown (these were abolished in favour of the indigo blue soon afterwards). This print shows most of the regimental peculiarities previously referred to.

There is in the Wolseley Room at the Royal United Service Institution a miniature painted by McBride in 1852, showing Ensign Wolseley (afterwards Lord Wolseley) in the uniform of the 80th, in which he served from 1852 to 1854.

This also confirms the details given and shows the breast plate to have been the same as that shown in the 1829 portrait (illustration 2). A further diminution in the size of the shako in 1854 necessitated still further new chaco plates. Those worn by Officers and rank and file were very similar, consisting of a Crowned star (gilt for Officers, brass for rank and file), with garter displaying the motto, *Honi soit qui mal y pense*. Both Regiments wore their respective numerals in the centre on black, and both had the Knot above the garter and below the Crown. All gilt.(1)

The introduction of the tunic in 1855 brought the uniforms of 38th and 80th, both Officers and rank and file, into close similarity; the numerals on buttons and chaco plates, and the waist belt buckles, being practically the only distinctive features worn. The circular clasps on the Officers' new waist-belts were almost identical, both having a Crown above a Knot in the centre, with the distinctive title of the Regiment round the circle. Illustration 9 shows that of the 80th.(2)

In 1861, the introduction of a still smaller chaco (of ribbed blue cloth with very little stiffening) necessitated yet further chaco plates for both Regiments. These were also all brass (gilt for Officers), consisting of a Crowned star and garter like the previous pattern, but smaller, and with the numerals (38 and 80 respectively) stamped

(1) The Knot does not appear to have been worn when this plate was first introduced, but was added some time before 1860.
(2) From Lieut.-Colonel M. B. Savage's Collection. See plate 18.

Digitized by Google

out in the centre, showing, therefore, black figures on a brass or gilt centre. The Knot does not appear on the plate of either Regiment.

In 1869, the size of the chaco was still again reduced, and a chaco plate of new design issued, consisting of a garter with proper motto surrounding a brass (gilt for Officers) centre, with numerals pierced out. This was surmounted by a Crown and had a laurel wreath round it. Illustration 8(1) shows the plate worn by the Officers of the 38th. It had a silver Staffordshire Knot mounted on below the garter. The 80th did not wear the Knot.

A photograph of the Officers of the 80th, taken in 1870 at Singapore,(2) shows them wearing a loose red serge jacket, pale yellow collar, but red cuffs. There are 5 buttons down the front, and a narrow white or gold piping right round the jacket (down front and along the bottom). A loop of similar braid, with trefoil at top, outlines the pointed cuff.

The soft, round forage cap, with flat peak and embroidered 80 in front, is worn.

The gradual simplification of the soldier's uniform had brought the dress of the 38th and 80th into great similarity. In 1871, the regimental buttons worn by the rank and file were replaced by the universal pattern still worn.

Sabretashes for mounted Officers were ordered in 1872. These were of plain black patent leather. The Officers of the 80th were wearing in 1877 a very handsome metal badge on the sabretash, consisting of a Sphinx (with Egypt) over the Staffordshire Knot, the whole surrounded by a wreath of laurels and surmounted by a Crown, all in gilt metal. In 1873, the Glengarry cap replaced the round Kilmarnock cap for undress. The brass badges worn on the side of this by the rank and file of the 38th and 80th are shown in illustrations 11 and 12 respectively.(3)

In the 1874 "Dress Regulations for Officers of the Army," the Staffordshire Knot was for the first time officially recognised as an authorised badge of the 80th (to be worn on the waist-belt plate, surmounted by a crown instead of the numeral only), although it had actually been worn practically from the raising of the Regiment. Curiously enough, the 38th, who, as we have seen, wore an almost identical waist-belt plate, failed to receive authority for this.

In 1878, the blue cloth helmet, with brass (rank and file) or gilt (Officers) mounts, was authorised. The star and Crown plate on the front was very similar to that worn on the Officers' 1844 Albert chaco, but the devices in the centre were different. The Officers of the 38th wore a large gilt garter, with proper motto in the centre surrounding gilt burnished numerals "38." A laurel wreath surrounded the garter, below which was a silver Knot. The Knot was removed in 1880 (possibly because no official sanction had been given to wear it). The Officers of the 80th at first had an almost exactly similar plate, but without the Knot, the "80" appearing on black velvet.(4)

In the South African Campaign of 1879, the 80th wore the scarlet serge jackets (introduced in 1872), with yellow collars and loops of white braid on scarlet cuffs, blue trousers with narrow scarlet stripe, and black leather gaiters.

---

(1) From a specimen in the Collection of Major Parkyn, Rifle Brigade. See plate 18.
(2) In the possession of Lieut.-Colonel M. B. Savage.
(3) See plate 18.
(4) There is a specimen of this helmet plate in the Museum of the Royal United Service Institution, No. 2347.

Digitized by Google

White helmets, without pugarees (stained brown with tea), with brass star off blue helmet in front.

All belts and straps were also stained brown.

Greatcoats were worn folded flat high up on the shoulders, much as the Guards wear them now, mess tins in black covers below, and black leather valises below mess tins.

The two ammunition pouches on the front of the belt were now white (stained brown), and the magazine pouch of black leather hung below the right-hand pouch.

The Martini-Henry breech-loading rifle (issued in 1875) and the long triangular bayonet were the arms.

The Officers appear to have campaigned in the blue patrol jacket, with helmets very similar to those of the men.

In 1881, on the introduction of the Territorial system, the 38th and 80th, whose early history had already naturally linked them together, were amalgamated with the King's Own Staffordshire Militia to form the South Staffordshire Regiment.

White replaced yellow as the facing colour, and new badges throughout were adopted common to all Battalions, and these by 1883 were as follows :—

BUTTONS.—A Crown above a Staffordshire Knot.

TUNIC COLLAR.—A Staffordshire Knot (in gold embroidery for the Officers, brass for the men).

HELMET PLATE.—In the centre of the universal Crowned brass (or gilt) stars and wreath a circle with the motto, *Honi soit qui mal y pense*, in the centre of which was a silver Sphinx over "Egypt" on a black velvet ground. On the silver universal scroll below, "The South Staffordshire Regiment." The rank and file had a similar badge, with the title of the Regiment on the circle, and without the scroll below.

WAIST PLATE.(1)—The Officers had a special plate combining the devices of all the Battalions. On the burnished gilt centre there appeared in silver a laurel wreath, within which was Windsor Castle (derived from the Militia), with the Sphinx over Egypt above and the Staffordshire Knot below, all in silver. On a scroll at the bottom, "The South Staffordshire Regiment." (The rank and file had the universal plate, with the Royal Crest in centre, and the title of the Regiment around.)

ON THE ROUND FORAGE CAP a rather elaborate embroidered badge, which was replaced before 1891 by a much simpler badge, consisting of a gilt metal Sphinx (with "Egypt") above a gold-embroidered Staffordshire Knot.

The 1883 badge is described as :—"On a raised ground of blue silk a gold-embroidered circle, inscribed 'The South Staffordshire Regiment.' The circle, surmounted by the Crown, in gold embroidery. Within the circle, on a black cloth recessed ground, the Sphinx over Egypt, with the Staffordshire Knot below in silver embroidery. The word Egypt embroidered in black silk."

---

(1) See illustration 10, plate 18. From Lieut.-Colonel M. B. Savage's Collection.

Digitized by Google

ON THE GLENGARRY worn by Officers on active service and peace manœuvres was a gilt garter, with proper motto, surmounted by a Crown and encircling a silver Sphinx on black velvet.

The men at this time wore the circle, which formed the helmet centre, with a Crown above it.

Apart from the changing of badges and the substitution of white for yellow facings, there was very little change in the uniform. Officers' lace now became Rose pattern. The cuffs of the rank and file became plain bands of white cloth on both the full dress tunic and the undress serge jacket.

The shoulder straps of red cloth had now the regimental title, S. Stafford, worked in white thread.

The 2nd Battalion, who came home in 1880, would adopt the new uniform almost as soon as it arrived.

The 1st Battalion served in the 1882 Campaign against Arabi Pasha in Egypt. The early part was fought in the home pattern red serges (being the last campaign in which red was worn), dark blue trousers, short black leggings, and white helmets, with pugarees, the Officers also adopting red serge jackets of similar pattern. The valise equipment was taken, but the valises and greatcoats appear to have been left at the base during the actual fighting.

At a later stage, grey flannel jackets were served out to most Regiments, and later still khaki drill muchas, at present worn in India and other hot climates. Officers appear to have carried their swords in brown leather Sam Browne belts.

About 1894, among other changes directed towards giving the Infantry soldier a more serviceable fighting dress, the folding Austrian pattern blue cloth service forage cap replaced the Glengarry as the undress head gear of the rank and file, and was also worn by Officers on manœuvres, marches, etc.

This had at first, as badge on the side, a plain brass Knot as worn on the men's collars, but this was soon replaced by the badge still worn on the forage cap.

In October, 1900, the 1st Battalion received khaki clothing preparatory to embarking for service in South Africa.

This consisted, for the rank and file, of loose khaki jackets without external pockets, with 5 buttons down the front, khaki trousers and khaki putties. The white helmet, with pugaree and leather chin strap, was also issued. This had a khaki cover, with neck curtain, on each side of which was sewn on a square of scarlet cloth, with "S. Stafford" embroidered in white. The ordinary home pattern Slade-Wallis equipment was taken. The Officers had similar jackets, but with turn-down collars and a patch pocket on each side of the breast. They wore brown leather Sam Browne belts, with two shoulder braces and khaki haversacks and water-bottle straps. Brown leather puttie leggings replaced the putties worn by the men. The helmets, with covers and red patches, were exactly like the men's, except that the patch was only worn on the right side. No collar badges were worn by either Officers or men.

Various modifications were made in South Africa, and near the end of the Campaign a drab coloured slouch hat was worn, and was retained for marching order.

Digitized by Google

For a short time after the return home of the Battalion a web bandolier equipment was also introduced, with shoulder and waist bandoliers.

2ND BATTALION, 1899-1911.

In 1893, the 2nd Battalion went to Egypt and thence to India, where it remained till transferred to South Africa in 1907. Lieut.-Colonel M. B. Savage, now commanding the 2nd Battalion, was with them from 1889, and has kindly furnished some most interesting notes as to the special features of the dress of the Battalion in India and South Africa from 1899 to 1911.

NOTES REGARDING DRESS OF 80TH REGIMENT WORN IN INDIA AND SOUTH AFRICA FROM 1899-1911.

BY LIEUT.-COLONEL M. B. SAVAGE, C.B.E., D.S.O.

"HEAD DRESS (1899).—A white helmet was worn for ceremonial and guard with the red serge tunic by all ranks, and also by Officers when wearing the tunic.

For all other parades a white helmet with a khaki cover was worn.

The white helmet was also worn with white clothing for ceremonial in the plains during the hot weather.

The field service cap was worn by all ranks in the evening when the sun was down.

HEAD DRESS ABOUT 1905-6.—The Wolseley Helmet was introduced about this time. The helmet had a khaki pugaree, and this helmet was at first worn both with khaki drill and red. It was most unpopular with all ranks when wearing red.

About this time a small patch of the regimental colours (yellow and red) was worn on the side of the helmet on the pugaree, and in addition a "Staffordshire Knot," made out of a piece of rope mounted on a small piece of red serge, was worn on the front of the helmet.

While the Battalion was stationed at Agra in 1904, the men, while at field training and musketry, wore a khaki Sola Topee, which was given to them out of the regimental funds.

During the present King's visit to India as Prince of Wales, he presented Colours to the 2nd Battalion at Benares. The Battalion on this occasion wore red, with khaki helmets, the Officers wearing cloth tunics. Shortly after this (about 1907) a white cover was issued, to be worn with the Wolseley Helmet on ceremonial parades and when red or white clothing was worn.

HELMET BADGE.—A Knot and Crown, similar to that worn at the present time with the Service Dress Cap, was worn with the Wolseley Helmet, with white cover and also in khaki in 1907. The regimental colours on the side of the helmet were done away with by the authorities on the arrival of the Battalion in South Africa in 1907.

WHITE CLOTHING.—In the plains of India during the hot weather white drill was worn on all ceremonial parades. Officers wore their gold sword belt under the coat, with slings coming from under the coat. Officers and sergeants also wore the red sash across the shoulder. When the red sash was changed and worn round the waist by Officers, the wearing of it in white was discontinued.(1)

(1) N.C.O.'s chevrons on white jackets were of gold lace with red edging. On the khaki jackets they were of khaki worsted on a red edging.

Digitized by Google

RANK AND FILE RED CLOTHING.—This was a scarlet serge jacket, with white collar and scarlet cuffs and shoulder straps. It had a white edging all round jacket and a chevron-shaped white edging to cuff, terminating in a trefoil.

EQUIPMENT.—In 1900, the Slade-Wallis equipment, with white belts and pouches, was worn at home, but with khaki haversack and water-bottle strap.

COLLAR BADGES.—A brass metal "Staffordshire Knot" was worn by Officers, W.O.'s, N.C.O.'s and men in white and khaki. In red, the men wore a similar badge to that worn in white and khaki, but the Officers in their tunic wore a gold-embroidered Knot.

BUTTONS.—Officers and all ranks not below the rank of Sergeant wear and have worn regimental buttons since 1900. The button has a Knot and Crown on it.

BOOTS—OFFICERS.—During the time that the Battalion was in India and South Africa, Officers, when not wearing putties, wore khaki overalls and Wellington boots. Field Officers also wore spurs.

In South Africa, during the hot season, khaki drill was worn for ceremonial, no white drill being issued in that country.

BELTS.—In South Africa, Officers wore a khaki belt, with brass buckle, when not wearing the sword, and the skirt of the coat was also cut longer.

BADGES IN MESS KIT.—In Mess Dress no badges of rank were worn from about 1896 to 1903, in this Battalion, the reason being that all Officers were considered equal in the Mess. After 1903, shoulder straps and badges of rank were worn.

MESS DRESS.—During the cold weather a plain scarlet mess jacket, with white roll collar (with small gold "Staffordshire Knots"), red shoulder straps and pointed white cuffs, was (and is still) worn.

This with a white cloth waistcoat, without collar, with 4 small flat gilt buttons having a raised silver "Crown over Knot" on them.

In the plains, during the hot weather, white mess dress was worn. In place of a waistcoat a red silk cumberbund was worn. Metal "Staffordshire Knot" badges were worn on the lapels of the white jacket.

SWORD KNOTS.—Officers in red and white wore gold sword knots, brown sword knots being worn in khaki.

White kid gloves were worn with tunics, and also in white.

FORAGE CAP.—In 1907, at Pretoria, the blue staff pattern forage cap was worn with red serge, described above."

1902.

In 1902, very drastic changes were made in the uniform of the whole Army, resultant on the Army Council's decision that at home only two different dresses would be provided, *i.e.* service dress and full dress.

These changes affected the 1st Battalion soon after their return home from South Africa. The principal alterations affecting N.C.O.'s and men were: In full dress (which henceforth was not worn with the marching order equipment), the tunic was made more ornamental by adding 3 pointed scarlet flaps, edged white, with 3 buttons to the skirts,

Digitized by Google

the round cuff was replaced by a pointed cuff, and the shoulder strap was edged with white.

(Abroad, this tunic was replaced for full dress by the scarlet serge, as described in Lieut.-Colonel Savage's notes.)

The red serge at home was entirely done away with, and the universal khaki service dress, practically as still worn, introduced.

The blue folding field service cap was replaced by the Broderick cap, also dark blue, with, for the South Staffordshire Regiment, a white crescent in front partially covered by a blue turned up flap. This in turn was replaced about 1904 by the large crowned blue cap, with black leather peak, as still worn.

The grey greatcoat was replaced by one of khaki.

For Officers, the changes were more drastic. On the tunic 3 pointed white edged flaps with buttons were added to the skirts. Tunics for all ranks were to have collars and cuffs laced and braided as for Lieutenants, but omitting the braid crow's foot and eye below the lace on cuff.

The dress shoulder sash and sword belt were abolished. A red silk waist sash replaced the former, a web sword belt worn under the tunic replaced the latter. The gold laced levée trousers were also abolished.

A universal pattern double-breasted blue frock coat was ordered, with 2 rows of gilt buttons down the front, at first 8 inches apart at the top, later 6 inches. Collar badges were worn on this, and the waist sash always worn with it.

The universal khaki service kit was now for wear on all undress parades and duties.

Khaki greatcoats took the place of the grey ones previously worn.

The staff pattern forage cap, with red welt round crown and black oak leaf, replaced the folding Austrian pattern.

At first, Infantry Officers were to have distinguishing shoulder straps on khaki jacket and greatcoat, viz. :—Drab cloth, with an edging of scarlet cloth; and were to have loops of braid ending in crows' feet running up the sleeve from the rings round cuff to distinguish the various ranks; but almost at once the present 3 pointed flap, with stars and crowns, was adopted for that purpose.

The red edged shoulder strap on the jacket was soon replaced by a plain drab cord, but was retained on the overcoat.

The rank badges on shoulder straps of tunic mess jacket, frock coat and greatcoat were altered. Captains to have 3 stars, Lieutenants 2 and Second Lieutenants 1.

1904.

The Wolseley pattern helmet was officially approved in February, and gradually replaced the old pattern for wear by all troops abroad. At first, khaki only, but later a white helmet was allowed for Review Order, and for wear with white clothing.

Later, a plain blue serge universal pattern jacket was introduced for Officers, to be worn (without collar badges) about barracks, but not for duties under arms or when parading with troops; and in 1913

Digitized by Google

the red shoulder straps on the men's tunics were replaced by white ones, with S. STAFFORD in brass.

Since the introduction of the round cuff for Infantry rank and file, Staff Sergeants had worn gold lace on the collar and cuffs in varying designs. In 1913, at Aldershot, the Sergt.-Major of the 2nd Battalion had an edging of ½ inch gold lace along the top and front of the collar, and a chevron of the same lace edging the pointed white cuff, with a further edging of gold cord outside the lace, terminating at the top in a trefoil.

1914.

At the commencement of the European War, all troops were put on active service, and all dress other than service dress was abolished.

The 1st Battalion at home embarked for Belgium with the 7th Division, the Officers wearing the service jacket, with turn-down collar open at the throat (introduced in 1912), with khaki shirt, collar and tie. This jacket had on the collar bronze collar badges of similar design to the badge on the cap, but smaller.

The head dress was the khaki service forage cap, with khaki peak, and for Officers bronze cap badge (Crown above Staffordshire Knot, scroll below with "South Staffordshire").

The regulation khaki breeches and putties were worn (mounted Officers wearing brown leather leggings) with brown boots.

The Sam Browne belt with sword was worn at first, although later swords were entirely done away with in this campaign.

The pea jacket, or "British Warm," was worn by most Officers instead of the long khaki double-breasted overcoat.

The men had a generally similar dress, but their jackets had a high turned-down collar buttoned right up to the neck, and they did not wear collar badges. They wore trousers under putties, and had the contract boots unblacked.

They wore the full web equipment as introduced in 1908, and carried the khaki greatcoats in their packs. The short Lee-Enfield rifle and bayonet, as issued in 1903, were carried.

Brass shoulder titles, cap badges (with white metal Knot) and buttons were worn at first.

Later, modifications and alterations were introduced as found necessary on service.

Metal trench helmets were introduced, at first painted plain khaki or dull green, afterwards regimental devices were painted on these, or metal cap badges were fastened to them. The 2nd Battalion, in 1920 (when in Cork), had a yellow band about ¾ inch wide painted right round the helmet, which was later replaced by a metal badge similar to that on the service forage cap fitted into a socket soldered to the front of the helmet.

Overcoats generally were shortened, and Sergeants got pea jackets of similar shape to those worn by Officers.

In the cold weather, fur coats with rough white or black fur outside were issued. Later, leather coats were found more serviceable. Coloured patches of cloth were added on the back and shoulders of the jackets and overcoats to distinguish the various divisions and units.

Digitized by Google

After swords ceased to be carried by Officers, the 2 slings leading to sword frog were taken off the Sam Browne belt, which henceforth was ornamental only.

Officers got a modified form of web equipment with pack similar to that worn by the men, but lighter all round.

1918-21.

The full dress uniform had not been re-introduced at the time of writing, although the universal blue serge, blue cloth forage cap, and blue trousers with red stripe were worn by Officers off duty in the evening, etc. The red, white-faced mess jacket was also worn by the 2nd Battalion in Ireland. At levées and other Royal functions, Officers possessing full dress could wear it, but could appear in service dress.

In India, the 1st Battalion still wore khaki drill, and the rank and file wore brass Staffordshire Knots on the collar of these.

The khaki shorts worn in India by some units had never been worn by the South Staffords.

This article concludes at a time when the dress of the South Staffordshire Regiment, Officers and men, is the dress of the whole British Army, with only the cap and collar badge and shoulder titles to distinguish them from practically any other unit, horse, foot, or artillery.

Digitized by Google

APPENDIX IV.

Honours Awarded the 1st Battalion.

VICTORIA CROSS.

(Zillebeke, 7-11-14.)
Captain J. F. Vallentin, V.C.

ORDER OF ST. MICHAEL AND ST. GEORGE.

(Ypres, 1914.)
Lieut.-Colonel R. M. Ovens, Major H. E. Walshe.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE ORDER.

(Festubert, 1915.)
Major S. Bonner.

11-12-16.
Major R. J. Morris, 2nd Lieut. J. Potter, Captain L. L. Hassell, M.C., Captain C. S. Burt, Major R. Persse, M.C., Lieut. J. Snape, M.C., Major A. B. Beauman, 2nd Lieut. W. H. Curry.

4-1-18.
Captain F. A. Kendrick, M.C., A/Lieut.-Colonel W. R. English-Murphy, M.C.

BAR TO D.S.O.

3-10-17.
Major A. B. Beauman, D.S.O.

MILITARY CROSS.

(1915.)
Captain A. W. Lee.

4-11-15.
Lieut. G. B. R. Schon, 2nd Lieut. H. D. Thompson, 2nd Lieut. R. Rankin.

July, 1916.
Lieut. E. de Trafford, 8860 C.Q.M.S. F. Bytheway, D.C.M., Captain J. Snape, 8689 R.S.M. F. Parr, D.C.M.

26-11-16.
2nd Lieut. F. P. Crosse, 2nd Lieut. W. A. Dickins.

1-1-17.
Lieut. A. G. Thomas, Captain W. C. Green, Lieut. C. E. Philcox.

10-1-17.
Captain E. Bell, 2nd Lieut. J. F. G. Evans, Lieut. W. C. Conley, 2nd Lieut. G. Bygrave.

26-3-17.
2nd Lieut. V. R. S. White, 9737 C.S.M. Gardner, Lieut. and Q.M.S. Bradbury.

Digitized by Google

M.C.—*continued.*

12-5-17.
Captain H. A. Cundall, Lieut. F. Robinson, 2nd Lieut. T. N. Woof, 6460 R.Q.M.S. A. Riley.

4-10-17.
Captain F. A. Kendrick, Lieut. E. Wolverson, Lieut. and Q.M. C. C. Wardle, 2nd Lieut. G. A. C. Sheffield, 2nd Lieut. C. J. R. Lansdell.

26-10-17.
2nd Lieut. D. C. G. Bardsley, Lieut. E. W. Booth, Lieut. W. R. English-Murphy.

27-11-17.
Lieut. J. A. Armstrong.

1-1-18.
Major C. D. Twiss.

18-5-18.
Lieut. S. G. Cuxson, Lieut. T. H. Searls.

7-6-18.
13079 C.S.M. E. Oliver, Captain W. F. P. Thomas, Captain C. A. Lawford, 2nd Lieut. H. D. Thompson, Lieut. P. R. Lowman.

30-7-18.
Captain E. Bache.

16-12-18.
2nd Lieut. J. Salt.

3-6-19.
Captain R. L. Hibberdine.

1-1-19.
2nd Lieut. J. H. Harrison.

BAR TO M.C.

26-9-18.
Captain F. A. Kendrick, M.C.

24-9-18.
Lieut. T. H. Searls, M.C.

8-4-18.
Lieut. V. R. S. White, M.C.

27-9-18.
Captain W. C. Green, M.C.

DISTINGUISHED CONDUCT MEDAL.

31-10-14.
C.S.M. R. Baker.

1-4-15.
5160 C.S.M. L. Maxfield, 7689 Lce.-Cpl. J. F. Castleford, 8507 Lce.-Cpl. J. Gough, 7866 Lce.-Cpl. J. T. Standley.

23-6-15.
8860 C.Q.M.S. F. Bytheway.

25-9-15.
9600 Pte. H. Edwards, 7577 C.S.M. L. Ford.

21-10-16.
Cpl. C. W. Leonard.

Digitized by Google

D.C.M.—*continued.*

27-11-16.
8765 Sergt. J. Imm, 8891 Cpl. J. Dales.

5-3-17.
8403 Sergt. J. Deffley, 40124 Pte. R. Harley, Sergt. T. Hawkins.

17-2-17.
8559 Sergt. W. Birchall, M.M.

27-3-17.
12083 Pte. R. Bateman.

1-9-17.
11990 C.S.M. S. Jackson, M.M.

13-5-17.
8152 C.S.M. A. Flowers, M.S.M.

25-11-17.
Cpl. J. Bolton, 13002 Sergt. J. Eades, M.M., 11271 Sergt. S. Robinson, M.M., 8550 Sergt. W. Wheatley, 25745 Cpl. J. Crowther.

5-1-18.
7876 Sergt. H. Rollinson.

21-1-18.
12844 Pte. F. Blewitt, C.S.M. T. Lockett, M.M., 10502 Sergt. W. H. Smith, M.M.

17-4-18.
Pte. A. James.

15-11-18.
8479 C.Q.M.S. T. Bills, M.M., 242478 Sergt. T. Higgs.

4-1-19.
8392 Sergt. E. T. Ballinger, M.M., 9513 Sergt. J. T. Birch, 13725 Cpl. G. H. Twinberrow, M.M., 200908 Pte. J. Bennett, 15061 Pte. J. Southall.

MILITARY MEDAL.

13-10-15.
200312 Lce.-Cpl. H. Wheatley.

10-8-16.
7022 Lce.-Sergt. A. E. Foulkes, 5993 Sergt. W. Truby.

16-9-16.
11990 C.S.M. S. Jackson.

14-12-16.
9765 Pte. F. Bird, 7173 Sergt. W. J. Barrett, 9168 Pte, C. V. Jones, 7083 Pte. F. Jones, 7511 Bandsman W. Neville, 9639 Pte. E. Parsons, 5205 Sergt.-Drummer J. Proderick, 7334 C.S.M. R. Rankin, 9928 Pte. G. Taylor, 9254 Pte. A. Wheatley.

20-2-17.
9487 A/Cpl. E. Cash, 7606 Cpl. F. North, 7768 Pte. T. Snape.

5-3-17.
9627 Sergt. A. Clevely, Sergt. A. Lawton, Sergt. T. Lynch, 17987 Sergt. A. H. Webb, Sergt. C. Wright, 8320 Cpl. C. Bagley, 9338 Cpl. J. Dyas, 8327 Cpl. F. Ford, Lce.-Cpl. W. Davies, 9293 Lce.-Cpl. J. Horan, 12971 Lce.-Cpl. T. S. Johnson, 7329 Lce-Cpl. J. D. Watson, 19550 Pte. H. Blytheway, 9043 Pte. G. Jackson, 9832 Pte. G. Lunn, 15926 Pte. A. Ousbourne, 19478 Pte. S. Taylor.

Digitized by Google

M.M.—*continued.*

27-3-17.

12803 Sergt. W. Allchurch, 11990 C.S.M. S. Jackson, 17579 Cpl. R. E. Smith, 16148 Lce.-Cpl. R. Gunton, 9800 Lce.-Cpl. B. W. Johnson, 16331 Pte. J. Boot, 32511 Pte. A. Bradford, 10258 Pte. A. Joyce, 8783 Pte. G. Davies, 40036 Pte. J. A. Mercer, 10547 Pte. H. Trumper, 13725 Pte. G. H. Twinberrow, 1680 Cpl. F. Jones, 8550 Pte. H. Wheatley, 8341 Pte. A. White.

13-5-17.

40062 Sergt. J. Grocott, 40049 Sergt. W. H. Murrell, 10019 Cpl. F. Mason, 12656 Cpl. H. Wright, 18421 Pte. A. Joyce, Pte. H. Trevillon.

15-6-17.

C.S.M. G. Gardner, Sergt. Worrall, Cpl. Fletcher.

21-7-17.

10019 Cpl. F. Mason, 200335 Cpl. E. Picken, 8703 Pte. G. Davies, 200348 Pte. A. Poole.

4-9-17.

8479 C.Q.M.S. T. Bills; Sergt. G. Swift; 7106 Cpls. E. Brockhurst, 11417 E. Partridge; 6893 Lce.-Cpls. S. Mantle, 11300 C. E. Stokes, 24093 H. E. Woods, 19517 G. Underhill; Ptes. G. Clarke, T. Frankum, 10845 D. Hicken, 6638 H. P. Hill, J. Humphreys, H. Mason, 12531 W. Myner, F. Matthews, 12927 A. Powney, T. Rutter, 9385 H. Skidmore, 9419 E. S. Tettey, 15313 J. Ward.

3-10-17.

8152 Sergt. A. Flowers, 17987 Sergt. A. H. Webb.

26-10-17.

Sergt. D. Elwell, Sergt. V. Caine, 13002 Sergt. J. Eades; Cpls. W. Morrell, T. Walsh; Lce.-Cpls. J. Cooke, R. Kendrick, E. Russell; Ptes. E. Bainbridge, J. Barker, R. Couley, D. Evans, W. Fellows, L. Mansell, D. Robin, W. Timson.

15-4-18.

Sergts. J. Gould, W. Lycett, C. Mee, 16895 G. Phillips; 9563 Cpls. A. Harrison, E. Overton, T. Bartlett, R. Curtis; Lce.-Cpls. R. Burton, 8789 S. Gill, W. Harrison; 11025 Ptes. H. Haynes, 35941 S. Powell, W. Powell, 30894 A. Sellick.

10-8-18.

28049 Lce.-Cpl. J. Ridgeway, 13949 Pte. J. Hinton.

Nov., 1918.

C.S.Ms. 7570 J. T. Leeke, 13079 E. Oliver, M.C., 7851 F. Webb; 24195 Sergt. J. F. Curtis; Cpls. 40130 S. Beasley, 8292 J. Davies; Lce-Cpls. 32579 W. Boxall, 238015 J. T. Cook, 41751 J. Kirton, 40033 J. Rowley, 40100 C. E. Salt; 41808 Pte. S. E. Watson.

8-3-19.

Sergt. Harrison.

11-2-19.

Pte. G. Spruce.

BAR TO MILITARY MEDAL.

5-3-17.

12053 Pte. R. Bateman, M.M.

13-5-17.

19225 Pte. A. Bunce, M.M.

Digitized by Google

BAR TO M.M.—*continued.*

4-9-17.

40062 Sergt. J. Grocott, M.M., 32511 Pte. A. Bradford, M.M., 10547 Pte. H. Trumper, M.M., 8989 Pte. W. Crawford, M.M.

17-4-18.

6893 Cpl. S. Mantle, M.M.

4-1-19.

Sergt. J. E. Gould, M.M., Sergt. W. Lycett, M.M., 10019 Cpl. F. Mason, M.M., 8817 Lce.-Cpl. R. Kendrick, M.M.

MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL.

30-11-16.

8152 Sergt. A. Flowers, M.M.

3-6-18.

7158 C.Q.M.S. Hiam.

3-6-19.

6460 R.Q.M.S. A. Riley, M.C., 9575 Sergt. L. Lane, 40080 Pte. J. Sinar.

1-1-19.

10602 Sergt. W. H. Smith, 7417 Sergt. A. McConvill, 9732 Pte. G. H. Francis.

FOREIGN DECORATIONS.

CROIX DE GUERRE (French).

Captain W. G. Green, M.C., Captain H. S. Blockey, 9600 Pte. H. Edwards, D.C.M.

BRONZE MEDAL FOR VALOUR (Italian).

Captain F. A. Kendrick, D.S.O., M.C., 2nd Lieut. J. Salt, M.C., 6893 Sergt. S. Mantle, M.M., 9569 A/Cpl. A. Harrison, 41622 Lce.-Cpl. R. Curtis.

SILVER MEDAL FOR VALOUR (Italian).

Captain E. de Trafford, M.C., Captain F. A. Kendrick, M.C., 16895 Sergt. G. Phillips, 40483 Pte. A. James.

CROCE DI GUERRA (Italian).

Captain A. W. Lee, M.C., Captain E. de Trafford, M.C., Captain F. Robinson, M.C., Major A. B. Beauman, D.S.O., 12388 Pte. R. Thompson, 32992 Pte. W. Beardsley, 8479 C.Q.M.S. T. Bills, D.C.M., M.M., 13949 Pte. J. Hinton, M.M.

30-6-15.

ORDER OF ST. STANISLAS, THIRD CLASS (Russian).

Brig.-General R. M. Ovens, C.M.G.

CROSS OF ST. GEORGE (Russian).

C.S.M. F. Parr (Third Class).
8860 C.Q.M.S. F. Bytheway (Fourth Class).

MEDAL OF ST. GEORGE.

Pte. G. Price (Fourth Class).

MENTIONED IN DESPATCHES.

Despatch dated 17-2-15.

Lieut.-Colonel R. M. Ovens, Major A. C. Buckle, Captains C. B. Adams, S. Bonner, J. S. S. Dunlop, J. F. Vallentin, Lieut. C. E. C. Bartlett, Q.M. and Captain F. H. White, 8281 Cpl. A. Baker.

Digitized by Google

MENTIONED IN DESPATCHES—*continued.*

23-6-15.

Major H. E. Walshe, Captain F. S. N. Savage-Armstrong, Lieut. C. W. Evans, Lieut. H. L. Mackintosh, 8597 A/C.S.M. W. B. Timmins, 7403 Bandsman J. Williams, Ptes. 6650 C. Bonning, 7511 W. Neville, 8549 F. Winchester.

15-10-15.

Lieut.-Colonel R. M. Ovens, C.M.G., Captain R. F. B. Naylor, Major R. Duckworth, Captain C. H. Green, Lieut. C. R. Limbery, Lieut. H. W. MacGeorge, 2nd Lieut. E. Bell, 2nd Lieut. A. W. Lee, Q.M. and Lieut. S. Bradbury, 4875 R.S.M. J. Snape, 9853 Sergt. W. H. Jordon, 3237 Sergt. F. Thorne, 8939 A/Sergt. A. Wilcox, 8112 Sergt. J. Wright, 6596 Sergt. F. Clarke, 7334 Sergt. R. Rankin, 7770 Cpl. G. Shepherd, 9314 Cpl. W. Vincent, 10501 Cpl. E. Chatwin, 7403 Cpl. J. Williams, 10410 Lce.-Cpl. H. Monger, 8981 Lce.-Cpl. F. Turner, 15299 Pte. G. Cooper, 8958 Pte. H. Cooper, 10609 Pte. J. McHale, 8500 Pte. C. Milner, 7511 Bandsman W. Neville, 9158 Pte. W. Price, 8549 Drummer E. Winchester.

16-6-16.

Captain A. B. Beauman, D.S.O.

9-4-17.

A/Lieut.-Colonel A. B. Beauman, D.S.O., Lieut. C. E. Philcox, R.Q.M.S. A. Riley, C.Q.M.S. C. H. Hiam.

25-2-17.

Major S. Bonner, D.S.O., Captain H. S. Blockey, Major and Q.M. F. H. White, Lieut. L. V. Fitzpatrick.

30-5-18.

Captain A. W. Lee, M.C., Lieut. C. S. Bailey, 8689 A/R.S.M. F. Parr, M.C., D.C.M., 9575 A/C.Q.M.S. M. Lane, 7417 Sergt. P. McConvill, 12491 Sergt. W. H. Pace, 10019 Cpl. F. Mason, M.M.

6-1-19.

A/Lieut.-Colonel W. R. English-Murphy, M.C., Captain C. S. Burt, Captain A. W. Lee, M.C., Captain G. Bygrave, M.C., 7783 Sergt. H. Cadwallader, 6460 R.Q.M.S. A. Riley, M.C., 10249 Pte. H. Wain, 7155 Pte. H. Wesley.

27-8-19.

Brig.-General R. M. Ovens, C.M.G., Brev.-Major A. B. Beauman, D.S.O.

Digitized by Google

Honours Awarded the 2nd Battalion.

VICTORIA CROSS.

(Loos, 28-3-16.)
Captain A. F. G. Kilby, M.C.

ORDER OF THE BATH.

Lieut.-Colonel C. S. Davidson.

ORDER OF ST. MICHAEL AND ST. GEORGE.

3-6-16.
Lieut.-Colonel L. B. Boyd-Moss, D.S.O.
1-1-18.
Lieut.-Colonel R. W. Morgan, D.S.O.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE ORDER.

4-11-14.
Captain M. B. Savage, Lieut. F. H. Gunner.
7-10-14.
Lieut. J. L. Dent.
14-1-16.
Major R. W. Morgan.
21-10-16.
Captain W. G. Fluke, Lieut.-Colonel W. H. Carter, M.C.
1-1-18.
Major G. A. S. Williams, D.S.O.
19-2-18.
Major G. Dawes, M.C.
3-6-18.
Major G. de C. Glover, M.C., Major S. G. Johnson, M.C.
27-8-18.
Lieut.-Colonel W. J. J. Collas.

BAR TO D.S.O.

20-10-16.
Lieut.-Colonel R. W. Morgan, D.S.O.
Major G. Dawes, D.S.O., M.C. (1st Bar, 26-7-18; 2nd Bar, 12-1-19).
18-1-19.
Lieut.-Colonel W. H. Carter, D.S.O., M.C.

MILITARY CROSS.

18-2-15.
Captain A. F. G. Kilby, Captain S. G. Johnson.
10-3-15.
2nd Lieut. L. T. Despicht.

Digitized by Google

M.C.—*continued.*

23-6-15.
Captain J. C. Chaytor, Lieut. J. S. Townshend,
2nd Lieut. W. Draycott Wood.

23-11-15.
2nd Lieut. W. H. Carter.

14-1-16.
2nd Lieut. B. R. Taylor.

30-3-16.
2nd Lieut. L. L. Hassell.

14-11-16.
Lieut. M. Kavanagh.

6-1-17.
Q.M. and Lieut. A. Hazelgrove, D.C.M.

13-2-17.
Q.M. and Lieut. H. A. Porter, 7502 C.S.M. W. Cox.

3-3-17.
2nd Lieut. C. R. Woolley, M.M.

17-4-17.
2nd Lieut. R. Baxter.

26-5-17.
8575 C.S.M. G. A. Hollis.

9-6-17.
Lieut. L. C. Bull.

26-7-17.
2nd Lieut. R. Ranken.

4-6-17.
2nd Lieut. J. West.

18-7-18.
2nd Lieut. C. T. Hinde, 2nd Lieut. H. M. Hussey,
Captain A. J. L. Pritchard.

1-8-18.
Major C. E. W. Charrington.

15-10-18.
2nd Lieut. R. T. Daniels.

1-1-18.
Captain S. Harper.

3-6-18.
6824 R.S.M. F. A. Ward.

26-9-18.
Captain L. J. Kelsey, 2nd Lieut. H. Appleby.

2-12-18.
Lieut. F. H. Slingsby, 2nd Lieut. A. Bellerson, 2nd Lieut. G. W. Poole,
2nd Lieut. H. R. Wallis.

11-1-19.
2nd Lieut. E. C. Powell.

10-10-19.
Captain R. H. Atkinson.

27-9-18.
2nd Lieut. C. H. Ricketts.

15-1-19.
Captain J. A. Russell.

Digitized by Google

BAR TO MILITARY CROSS.

2-12-18.
Captain J. West, M.C.

16-9-16.
Lieut. W. H. Carter, M.C.

DISTINGUISHED CONDUCT MEDAL.

6-11-14.
5005 Pte. A. Mutlow.

15-11-14.
6250 Lce.-Cpl. J. Smith.

17-12-14.
6871 Pte. W. A. Simmonds.

18-2-15.
6849 Sergt. E. Shine.

10-3-15.
7352 Lce.-Cpl. W. Johnson.

1-4-15.
8791 Pte. S. Caddick.

1-6-15.
11509 Pte. B. Hesson, 8844 Pte. W. Hill.

23-6-15.
9312 Pte. C. Allen, 8362 Sergt. A. Busby, 6330 Lce.-Cpl. H. Cotterill, 6874 Cpl. J. Hunt.

5-8-15.
8804 Pte. T. Ball, 8954 Pte. A. E. Edwards, 7154 Pte. J. B. Flowers, 9472 Pte. W. Manford, 5680 Pte. W. Stokes.

16-11-15.
8305 Pte. T. Parsons.

14-1-16.
9740 Pte. R Knowles, 8327 Lce.-Cpl. E. Swinnerton, 9686 Pte. C. H. Tuckley.

25-2-16.
4456 C.Q.M.S. T. G. Allen, 12628 Lce.-Cpl. E. Hathaway.

3-6-16.
7408 Pte. S. E. Till, 8322 C.S.M. W. Wright.

13-2-17.
8068 A/Lce.-Sergt. W. C. Mackowsky, 19309 Pte. R. C. Pountney.

3-3-17.
9398 Cpl. G. H. Lester.

17-4-17.
12612 Sergt. T. H. Rogers.

15-11-18.
16173 Sergt. G. H. Bullock, M.M., 242478 Sergt. T. Higgs, 8988 C.S.M. D. M. King, 200632 C.S.M. J. Stanton, 16274 Lce.-Cpl. G. Yates.

26-3-18.
9404 Pte. E. Garratt, 6098 Sergt (A/C.S.M.) F. Harrison, 9939 Sergt. W. T. Harrison.

Digitized by Google

BAR TO D.C.M.

25-2-16.
6330 Lce.-Cpl. H. Cotterell, D.C.M.

10-8-16.
8891 Lce.-Cpl. Dales, 8505 Cpl. J. Sadler.

11-10-16.
8836 Pte. G. Davies.

8-1-17.
8222 Sergt. A. E. Lane.

20-2-17.
8963 Pte. J. Barlow, 9040 Lce.-Cpl. W. Robbins, 6062 Sergt. T. Wilkes, 9152 Sergt. I. L. Williams.

MILITARY MEDAL.

3-6-16.
7388 Lce.-Sergt. G. H. Brittain, 16285 Pte. D. Green, 8508 Sergt. C. R. Woolley.

12-9-16.
8587 Drummer J. A. Delmar, 9271 Lce.-Cpl. W. Fletcher, 9037 Pte. H. Gleeson, 8325 Lce.-Cpl. N. Hambleton, 9330 Sergt. J. Heywood, 9289 Pte. J. Hollyhead, 9687 Pte. A. Humphries, 7933 Sergt. R. Hyde, 7757 C.S.M. W. Jeavons, 9721 Pte. D. L. Lakin, 8773 Pte. A. N. Letts, 7458 C.Q.M.S. W. H. Lichfield, 12698 Lce-Sergt. B. Mallinson, 18191 A/Cpl. T. Ritchie, 7283 Sergt. E. A. Rowledge.

21-10-16.
9586 Pte. J. A. Beaver, 16173 Pte. G. H. Bullock, 16129 Sergt. H. W. Foster, 9625 Pte. F. Foundling, 18642 Sergt. J. Herrington, 17154 Pte. W. Jackson, 9039 Lce.-Sergt. F. Lea, 13116 Pte. T. Silk, 16398 Pte. S. Thomas, 8807 Sergt. A. W. Vizor, 8267 Pte. H. Watts.

17-4-17.
9738 Pte. J. Gavin, 9535 A/Sergt. W. H. Grant, 16306 Cpl. G. S. Delaney, 9178 Pte. W. Broadhurst, 10045 Pte. W. G. Hayward, 8786 Pte. J. C. F. Matthews.

18-7-17.
9497 Cpl. T. Pickerill.

13-3-18.
22046 A/Cpl. A. Cole, 10089 Pte. R. Blunt, 12075 Pte. W. H. Cox, 7527 Sergt. A. Gibbs, 26553 Lce.-Cpl. H. Hickling, 8048 Pte. G. Hunter, 16337 Sergt. R. Lane, 9815 Lce.-Cpl. H. Pearsall, 30237 Pte. T. Screen.

29-8-18.
11113 Pte. T. Ward.

16-7-18.
7952 Sergt. H. Finlan, 23040 Pte. H. Hicks, 8868 Pte. E. Peddson, 9359 Pte. H. G. Wood.

11-2-19.
235345 Sergt. P. Kiddle, 235374 Sergt. G. H. Mann, 40567 Sergt. S. P. Moyer, 235347 Sergt. J. W. Smith, 235314 Sergt. R. H. Turner, 42511 Cpl. J. R. Cooper, 235319 Cpl. A. S. Keble, 16444 Cpl. A. C. Law, 235351 Cpl. G. F. Long, 235321 Cpl. G. T. Overton, 203711 Lce.-Cpl. W. Barratt, 235356 Pte. S. W. Brewster, 23237 Pte. R. Carless, 46805 Pte. S. Clowes, 42895 Pte. W. F. Cook, 9571 Pte. J. T. Danks, 15432 Pte. S. Hale, 37001 Pte. T. W. Higgs, 9142 Pte. F. Hill, 46990 Pte. A.

Digitized by Google

M.M.—*continued.*

Lockwood, 42951 Pte. A. F. Norgate, 42952 Pte. F. Parnell, 26537 Pte. J. W. Riley, 235370 Pte. R. P. Scott, 19820 Pte. W. Shaw, 17151 Pte. S. Thomas, 235372 Pte. H. H. Upson, 200417 Pte. E. Want, 16976 Pte. G. Weston, 40997 Pte. J. T. Williams, 235393 Pte. C. E. V. Woods, 42563 Pte. G. W. Yardley.

22-8-19.
21933 C.Q.M.S. E. Stephenson.

BAR TO MILITARY MEDAL.

17-4-17.
8222 Sergt. A. E. Lane, M.M.

18-10-17.
9738 Pte. J. Gavin, M.M.

16-7-18.
9497 Sergt. T. Pickerill, M.M.

13-3-18.
8995 Lce.-Cpl. H. Parton, M.M.

2ND BAR TO MILITARY MEDAL.

16-7-18.
9738 Pte. J. Gavin, M.M.

MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL.

18-10-16.
7917 Sergt. (A/Q.M.S.) A. Lort.

17-6-18.
7952 Sergt. H. Finlan, 9171 Sergt. J. C. Hill, 5281 C.S.M. A. Tarbet.

3-6-19.
8988 C.S.M. D. M. King, 8438 Sergt. F. C. Chandler.

24-1-19.
8233 C.Q.M.S. P. H. Ogben.

FOREIGN DECORATIONS.

CROSS OF THE ORDER OF ST. GEORGE (Russian).

30-6-15.
6874 Cpl. J. Hunt (Third Class).
6330 Lce.-Cpl. H. Cotterill (Fourth Class).

MEDAL OF ST. GEORGE (Russian).

30-6-15.
8362 Sergt. A. Busby (Second Class), 11509 Pte. B. Hesson (Third Class), 7072 Lce.-Cpl. B. Fitzpatrick (Fourth Class).

ORDER OF ST. STANISLAUS (Russian).
Lieut.-Colonel W. H. Carter, D.S.O., M.C.

FRENCH LEGION OF HONOUR.
CROIX DE CHEVALIER.

11-10-14.
Lieut. J. C. Chaytor, Lieut. R. F. B. Naylor.

Digitized by Google

FOREIGN DECORATIONS—*continued.*

CROIX D' OFFICIER (French).
Lieut.-Colonel L. B. Boyd-Moss, C.M.G., D.S.O.

MEDAILLE MILITAIRE (French).
11-10-14.
6911 Sergt. W. G. Gascoigne.

CROIX DE GUERRE (French).
29-1-19.
Lieut.-Colonel G. Dawes, D.S.O., M.C.

22-7-19.
4980 C.S.M. A. Burgoyne, D.C.M.

BELGIAN CROIX DE GUERRE.
12-7-18.
6957 Pte. G. H. Bromige, 7527 Sergt. A. Gibbs.

MENTIONED IN DESPATCHES.

Despatch dated 14-1-15.
Lieut.-Colonel C. S. Davidson, Major P. C. L. Routledge, Captain S. G. Johnson, Captain A. F. G. Kilby, Captain M. B. Savage, Captain C. H. Thomas, Lieut. J. L. Dent, D.S.O., Lieut. F. H. Gunner, D.S.O., Lieut. J. S. Sharpe, 2nd Lieut. B. J. H. Scott.

Despatch dated 15-10-15.
Colonel C. S. Davidson, C.B., Brev.-Lieut.-Colonel L. B. Boyd-Moss, Brev.-Lieut.-Colonel P. C. L. Routledge, Major R. W. Morgan, Lieut. A. de Hamel, 2nd Lieut. W. H. Carter, 2nd Lieut. C. R. Hinde, 2nd Lieut. D. M. Williams, 6062 Sergt. T. Wilkes, 8549 Driver E. Winchester, 16285 Pte. H. Green, 2nd Lieut. B. R. Taylor, 2nd Lieut. R. B. Gibson, 2nd Lieut. C. W. Macfie, 6676 Pte. Littlewood.

Despatch dated 30-11-15.
Captain A. F. G. Kilby.

Despatch dated 30-4-16.
Brev.-Lieut.-Colonel L. B. Boyd-Moss, Captain J. C. Chaytor, Captain L. F. Stephenson, Captain R. F. B. Naylor, A/Captain R. P. Phipps, 2nd Lieut. A. F. V. A. Trevarthen, 7458 C.S.M. W. H. Lichfield, 8980 Lce.-Cpl. C. Howard, 8325 Lce-Cpl. N. Hambleton, 9037 Pte. H. Gleeson.

Despatch dated 9-4-17.
Lieut. (A/Captain) S. W. H. S. Douglas-Willan, 2nd Lieut. G. Dutton, 6824 R.Q.M.S. F. A. Ward, 7322 Sergt. A. Bellerson, 16306 Cpl. G. S. Delaney.

Despatch dated 7-11-17.
Major (Temp. Lieut.-Colonel) M. B. Savage, D.S.O.,
2nd Lieut. A. M. Campbell, Captain E. O. Kay.

Despatch dated 7-4-18.
Brev.-Lieut.-Colonel L. B. Boyd-Moss, C.M.G., D.S.O., Major S. S. Butler, D.S.O., Brev.-Major G. de C. Glover, M.C., T/Lieut.-Colonel A. H. C. James, M.V.O., D.S.O., Lieut.-Colonel S. J. Jervis, A/Lieut.-Colonel C. E. R. G. Alban, D.S.O., Lieut.-Colonel J. J. Cameron, D.S.O., M.C., Lieut.-Colonel G. Dawes, D.S.O., M.C., A/Major S. G. Johnson, M.C., Lieut. R. M. MacTavish, Major M. B. Savage, D.S.O., A/Major J. S. Sharpe, A/Captain M. W. T. Wyon, 6215 Sergt. W. Alsop, Major G. A. S. Williams, D.S.O.

Despatch dated 8-11-18.
A/Major S. Harper, M.C., Captain A. Hazelgrove, M.C., D.C.M., Captain J. Hazelwood, M.C., D.C.M., A/Captain A. B. Miller, D.S.O., M.C., 12489 Pte. B. Smith.

Digitized by Google

MENTIONED IN DESPATCHES—*continued.*

Despatch dated 7-7-19.

Brev.-Major G. de C. Glover, D.S.O., M.C., Major R. W. Morgan, C.M.G., D.S.O., Brev.-Major R. F. B. Naylor, M.C., Lieut. J. F. Benoy, Major W. J. J. Collas, Lieut. G. Dutton, 8812 Cpl. W. Dunn, 12298 C.Q.S. G. Hubball, 7215 C.Q.S. W. Phillips, 6824 R.S.M. F. A. Ward, M.C., 16821 Pte. J. Yates.

NOTE.—Owing to the enormous difficulty in identifying names of recipients, and full records of these Awards not being kept by units, these lists are not to be taken as perfect. I have spared no effort to make the lists complete, and to those whose names *may* have been omitted this is my explanation and apology.

J. P. J.

Digitized by Google

ADDENDA.

Page 61, line 15. For "deserves" read "deserve."

Page 175. For "Marmetz" read "Mametz."

Page 205. For "Brodseinde" read "Broadseinde."

Page 301. For "Captain H. S. Blockley" read "Captain H. S. Blockey."

Page 320. For "2nd Lieut. T. P. Peed" read "2nd Lieut. T. P. Reed."

Page 326. For "2nd Lieut. J. R. Malpass" read "2nd Lieut. J. L. Malpass."

Page 315. For "2nd Lieut. E. P. S. Burnett" read "2nd Lieut. F. P. S. Burnett."

Page 302. For "2nd Lieut. A. O. Johnson" read "2nd Lieut. A. D. Johnson."

Page 368. For "Major E. O. Kay" read "Major G. O. Kay."

Page 378. For "2nd Lieut. E. T. Chapman" read "2nd Lieut. E. T. Chipham."

Page 348, line 10. For "at" read "as."

OFFICERS OF THE 1ST BATTALION, AT CORBIE, BRAY-SUR-SOMME, MAY, 1916.

See Plate 11, page 177.

Back Row, Left to Right.—2nd Lieut. W. HALL, 2nd Lieut. J. T. LLOYD, 2nd Lieut. POTTER, 2nd Lieut. H. BROCKLESBY, Captain V. J. HALLAM, 2nd Lieut. J. SNAPE, D.S.O., M.C.

Third Row.—R.S.M. C. HOPKINS, Lieut. F. SECKINGTON, Lieut. W. R. ENGLISH-MURPHY, D.S.O., M.C., Brigadier ALFRED CASHIR (French Interpreter), Lieut. B. W. P. FLOREY, Captain J. D. LEES, Captain C. R. LIMBERY, M.C., 2nd Lieut. L. WOLVERSON, M.C., 2nd Lieut. S. A. WEBBER.

Second Row.—2nd Lieut. O. A. TUNNICLIFFE, M.C., Major R. J. MORRIS, D.S.O., Lieut.-Colonel R. M. OVENS, C.M.G., Lieut. and Q.M. S. BRADBURY, M.C., Captain H. C. H. MARRIOTT.

Front Row.—Lieut. E. DE TRAFFORD, M.C., Captain G. H. N. JONES-MITTON, Captain G. WHITE, 2nd Lieut. V. R. S. WHITE, M.C.

Digitized by Google

War Memorial at Whittington Barracks.

On Saturday, 30th September, 1922, in the presence of a representative gathering from all parts of the country, and with impressive military ceremony, there was unveiled by Lieut.-General Sir C. Tucker, G.C.B., G.C.V.O., the War Memorial to the South Staffordshire Regiment.

The Earl of Dartmouth, in a brief opening address, remarked that he had been Lord-Lieutenant of Staffordshire for thirty years. They were thirty years of pleasant memories, and nothing had given him greater satisfaction than the privilege he had that day of expressing, on behalf of the County, its gratitude for the services of the men of the Staffordshire Regiments, and its sympathy with them in the loss of their comrades. He was proud to think that it was their own County Regiments that had set the pace for the "Old Contemptibles," than which no higher compliment could be paid to a British soldier. The history of the Regiment was a great one, and it would be a satisfaction to every soldier joining to know that he had a share in its history and traditions. It was for him to see that these did not suffer at his hands.

Afterwards, the Lord Bishop of Lichfield (Dr. J. A. Kempthorne) dedicated the Memorial "To the glory of God and in memory of the Officers, Warrant Officers, N.C.O.'s and Men of the South Staffordshire Regiment who gave their lives for their King and Country."

Lieut.-General Sir Charles Tucker then gave an inspiring address, and spoke of the glorious record of the South Staffordshire Regiment in the Great War, and, alluding to the Old Comrades' Association connected with the Regiment, spoke of the beneficent work they were doing in assisting those in distress and disabled by the War.

The ceremony concluded with the singing of the National Anthem and the buglers sounding the "Reveille."

The space round the Memorial and adjoining the parade ground was closely packed with spectators, many of whom were mourning old comrades or relations lost in the War. A bright spot of colour in front of the Memorial was afforded by two Chelsea pensioners in their brilliant scarlet uniform.

Major G. A. Yool, D.S.O., was in command of the Depôt troops, who, headed by their band, were formed up in close column facing the Memorial. They received the Lord Lieutenant with a "General Salute"—the striking precision of their movements made a marked impression on the spectators. In fact, the parade was so good that it would have satisfied the most exacting critic.

The South Staffordshire Regiment's Memorial is in the form of an obelisk of Portland stone, about 29 feet high, mounted on a boldly modelled base, with three broad steps. It is surmounted by a bronze figure of the Sphinx, one of the badges of the Regiment, and on one face of the base is a large bronze Staffordshire Knot and Crown, another of the Regiment's badges. On another panel is recorded, in deeply cut letters in the stone, the Battle Honours, some 29 in number, borne by the Regiment previous to the Great War. On the third panel is the following inscription:—"This monument is erected as a record of the war service of the South Staffordshire Regiment in its many campaigns, and to commemorate the services together of its Line, Special Reserve, Territorial, Service, and Garrison Battalions in the Great War of 1914-1918." The fourth panel is at present blank, waiting to receive the Honours awarded the Regiment for its services in the Great War, 1914-1918.

Digitized by Google

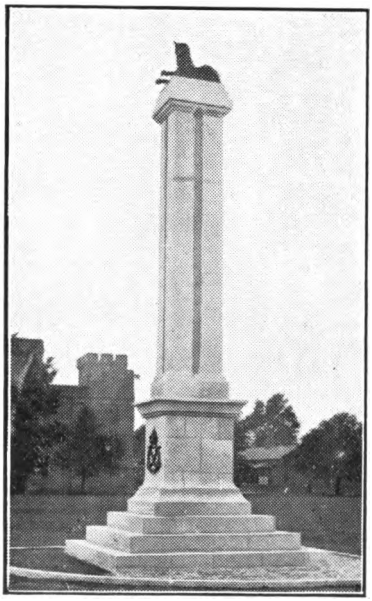


Photo. *Staffs. Advertiser.*

THE WAR MEMORIAL
AT
WHITTINGTON BARRACKS,
LICHFIELD.

PLATE 19.

To face p. 468.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS.

ADAMS, CAPTAIN C. BOYS, South Staffs. Regiment.
ADAMS, TOM BYRON, Compton Hall, Compton, Staffs.
ANDERSON, MAJOR A. L. K., Castlethorpe, Bucks.
ARKLE, SERGT. V., South Staffs. Regiment.
ARNOTT, SERGT., South Staffs. Regiment.

BAILLON, M.C., LIEUT. J. A., 2nd South Staffs. Regiment.
BALLINGER, SERGT. DRM. W. B., 2nd South Staffs. Regiment.
BEAUMAN, D.S.O., LIEUT.-COL. A. B., Seafield, Sea View, Isle of Wight.
BENOY, CAPTAIN J. M., 2nd South Staffs. Regiment.
BENT, MAJOR W. H. MORRIS, Deerswell, Paignton, Devon.
BIGGIE, 2ND LIEUT. B. N. RUSSELL, 2nd South Staffs. Regiment.
BLIZZARD, F. R., 52, Compton Road, Wolverhampton.
BLOCKEY, CAPTAIN H. S., 2nd South Staffs. Regiment.
BOOTH, LIEUT. E. WALTER, Army Pay Office, Canterbury.
BRADBURY, CAPTAIN G. E., 21, New Penkridge Road, Cannock.
BROADWOOD, CAPTAIN FRANCIS, Hevercourt, Singlewell, Gravesend.
BULWER, COLONEL E. A. E., Heydon Grange, Aylsham, Norfolk.
BYGOTT, LIEUT. J. F., 2nd South Staffs. Regiment.

CHAYTOR, D.S.O., M.C., MAJOR J. C., South Staffs. Regiment.
CLAPHAM, COLIN H., 22, Queen Square, Wolverhampton.
CLARIDGE, 2ND LIEUT. R., 2nd South Staffs. Regiment.
COMMINGS, LIEUT.-COLONEL P., United Service Club, Pall Mall, London.
COLLAS, D.S.O., LIEUT.-COLONEL J. J., South Staffs. Regiment.
COOPER, LIEUT. R. W. H., 2nd South Staffs. Regiment.
CORNISH BROTHERS, LTD., 30, New Street, Birmingham.
COZENS, A. D. (Retired Captain, late 3rd and 4th Battalions, Staffs. Volunteers), St. Ronans, Walsall.
CULHANE, LIEUT. A. J., 1st South Staffs. Regiment, Burmah.
CURRY, LIEUT. W. J., 43, Leinster Avenue, East Sheen.

DARTMOUTH, K.C.B., THE RT. HON. THE EARL OF, Patshull, Staffs.
DAUBENEY, C.B.E., D.S.O., BRIG.-GENERAL E. K., Eastington House, Cirencester.
DAVIDSON, C.B., BRIG.-GENERAL C. S., 74, Portland Court, London, W.1.
DEAKIN, CAPTAIN H. A., 2nd South Staffs. Regiment.
DENT, MRS. J. L., Harborne Park, Harborne, Birmingham.
DENT, T.D., M.B., F.R.C.S., COLONEL H. H. C. (A.M.S., T.F.), Waterloo Road, Wolverhampton.
DICKINS, M.C., LIEUT. W. A., 1st South Staffs. Regiment.
DIXON, M.C., LIEUT. S. F., 1st South Staffs. Regiment.
DOKE, LIEUT. T. W., The South Staffs. Regiment.
DUCK, CAPTAIN F. PONSONBY, 2nd South Staffs. Regiment, Town Arsenal, Guernsey.
DUTTON, LIEUT. & Q.M., G., 1st South Staffs. Regiment.
DEPOT, Officer Commanding the South Staffs. Regiment (per MAJOR G. A. YOOL, D.S.O.), Whittington Barracks.

ENGLISH-MURPHY, D.S.O., M.C., LIEUT.-COLONEL W. R., Dingleburn, Fahan, Londonderry, Ireland.
EVANS, M.C., LIEUT. J. F. G., 39, High Street, Cowbridge, Glamorgan.

FARNALL, ERNEST, 33, Borrowdale Road, Sefton Park, Liverpool.
FARNALL, JOSEPH, Tettenhall.
FINLINSON, CAPTAIN A. L., 2nd South Staffs. Regiment.

Digitized by Google

FINLINSON, 2ND LIEUT. N. W., 2nd South Staffs. Regiment.
FLUKE, D.S.O., CAPTAIN G. W., Junior Army and Navy Club, London.
FOULKES, CAPTAIN KENNETH, 2nd South Staffs. Regiment.
FREEMAN, MRS. HAROLD, Beechlands, Malvern Wells.
FREER, V.D., COLONEL W. J., The Stony Gate, Leicester.
FRIZELL, LIEUT.-COLONEL C. W., O.C. Depôt, Lichfield.

GLOVER, D.S.O., COLONEL R. F. B., Cliffe House, Salcombe, Devon.
GLOVER, D.S.O., M.C., MAJOR G. DE C., Cliffe House, Salcombe, Devon.
GOING, LIEUT.-COLONEL G. N., Welsh Bicknor, Ross-on-Wye.
GRAMMAR SCHOOL, THE WOLVERHAMPTON.
GUNNER, D.S.O., MAJOR F. H., 2nd South Staffs. Regiment.
GREENWOOD, LIEUT. A. C. O., 2nd South Staffs. Depôt, Lichfield.
GYDE, CAPTAIN A. A. E., 2nd South Staffs. Regiment.

HARLAND, M.C., CAPTAIN C. C., 2nd South Staffs. Regiment.
HALL, LIEUT. R. M., 1st South Staffs. Regiment.
HAMEL, M.C., CAPTAIN A. DE, Wiggington Lodge, Tamworth.
HARPER, M.C., CAPTAIN S., Whittington Barracks, Lichfield.
HARRISON, MRS. C. B. (LIEUT. F. L. HOLMES), Evesham House, Cheltenham.
HAYDEN, F., 5, Newbridge Crescent, Wolverhampton.
HAZELGROVE, CAPTAIN A., 2nd South Staffs. Regiment.
HEARN, CAPTAIN G. W. R., 1st South Staffs. Regiment.
HIBBERDINE, M.C., CAPTAIN R. L. (late 1st S.S.R.), Pele Tower, Corbridge-on-Tyne.
HICKMAN, J.P., EDWARD, Danescourt, Tettenhall.
HICKMAN, C.B., D.S.O., D.L., BRIG.-GENERAL T. E., Wergs Hall, Wolverhampton.
HICKMAN, V. E., The Woodhouse, Tettenhall.
HINCHLIFFE, C.F., REV. STANLEY, 36, Tennyson Avenue, Scarborough.
HIND, F.R.C.S. Eng., ALFRED E., Portland House, Jersey.
HODGSON, MAJOR C. F. F., 1st South Staffs. Regiment.
HODGSON, MAJOR C. F. F., 1st South Staffs. Regiment, P.R.I.
HOLLAND, R.Q.M.S. H., 2nd South Staffs. Regiment.
HOMER, C.B.E., D.L., JOHN T., Dormston, Sedgley, Staffs.
HORDERN, CAPTAIN A. F., 2nd South Staffs. Regiment.
HOULE, LIEUT. S. H., 2nd South Staffs. Regiment.
HYNES, D.S.O., LIEUT.-COLONEL E. T., Vienna.

IMM, C.S.M., J., 2nd South Staffs. Regiment.

JACKSON, MAJOR R. W. H. (R.A.M.C.), Ashdene, Morfa Nevin, North Wales.
JAMES, M.V.O., D.S.O., BRIG.-GENERAL A. H. COTES, The Hermitage, Walton-on-the-Hill, Surrey.
JERVIS, LIEUT.-COLONEL SWYNFEN J., Wellington Club, London, S.W.1.

KELL, K.B.E., C.B., COLONEL SIR VERNON G. W., General Staff, War Office, Whitehall.
KELL, 2ND LIEUT. V. W., 2nd South Staffs. Regiment.
KEENE, CAPTAIN F. P., Hillcroft, Broadstone, Dorset.
KER, KENNETH M., Long Copse, Wadhurst, Sussex.
KILBY, SANDFORD J., Skelton House, Lillington Avenue, Leamington.
KIRKPATRICK, C.B.E., LIEUT.-COLONEL IVONE, Kilspanning, Mallow, co. Cork.

LASSETTER, C.B., C.M.G., BRIG.-GENERAL H. B., Naval and Military Club, London, W.1.
LEE, M.C., LIEUT. A. W., 1st South Staffs. Regiment.
LICHFIELD, THE VERY REV. THE DEAN OF, The Deanery, Lichfield.
LOWDER, A. J., 260, Hordern Road, Wolverhampton.

Digitized by Google

MANDER, GERALD P., Tettenhall Wood, Wolverhampton.
MANDER, MRS. HOWARD, Trysull Manor, Wolverhampton.
MANDER, M.C., CAPTAIN H. VIVIAN, Trysull Manor, Wolverhampton.
MASON, 2ND LIEUT. S. C., 2nd South Staffs. Regiment.
MITTON, CAPTAIN G. H. N. JONES, 1st South Staffs. Regiment.
MORGAN, C.M.G., D.S.O., LIEUT.-COLONEL R. W., 1st South Staffs. Regiment.
MORRIS, CAPTAIN R. J., 2nd South Staffs. Regiment.

NAYLOR, R.Q.M.S., W. R., 2nd South Staffs. Regiment.

OLIVE, ERNEST, Junior United Service Club, London, S.W.1.
OVENS, C.M.G., BRIG.-GENERAL R. M., Aughnagaddy House, Ramelton, co. Donegal.
OXLADE, LIEUT. E. R., South Staffs. Regiment.

PARKINS, R.Q.M.S., A., 124, Waterloo Road, Wolverhampton.
PHIPPS, R. P., Tettenhall.
PIPE-WOLFERSTON, LIEUT.-COLONEL E. S., Statfold Hall, Tamworth, Staffs.
POPE, 2ND LIEUT. C. A. G. (S.S.R.), Compton Park House, Plymouth.
PRUE, SERGT. T., 1st South Staffs. Regiment.

RADCLIFFE, SERGT. P., 2nd South Staffs. Regiment.
RAITT, K.C.I.E., C.B., MAJOR-GENERAL SIR HERBERT A., Shorncliffe Road, Folkestone.
RANKIN, M.C., M.M., LIEUT. ROBERT, Oxford Street, Whitley Bay, Northumberland.
RHODES, W., 10, St. Mary's Terrace, Beverley, East Yorks.
RICKETTS, LIEUT. C. H., Parkwood, Harrietsham, Kent.
RYLAND, FRED G. W., 205, Tettenhall Road, Wolverhampton.

SAVAGE, C.B.E., D.S.O., LIEUT.-COLONEL M. B., Commanding 2nd South Staffs. Regiment.
SECKHAM, D.S.O., COLONEL B. T., Whittington Old Hall, Lichfield.
SHORE, MAJOR H. K., The South Staffs. Regiment.
SHORTHOSE, CAPTAIN W. J. T., 2nd South Staffs. Regiment.
SERGEANTS' MESS LIBRARY (per LIEUT.-COLONEL M. B. SAVAGE), 2nd South Staffs. Regiment.
SHUTT, M.C., LIEUT. W. R., (2nd South Staffs. Regiment), The Oaklands, Aldridge, Staffs.
SIMPSON, LIEUT. C. V., 1st South Staffs. Regiment.
SMITH, PIONEER SERGT., 2nd South Staffs. Regiment.
SMITH, 2ND LIEUT. C. L., 1st South Staffs. Regiment.
SNAPE, LIEUT. E. F., 1st South Staffs. Regiment.
STATIONERY OFFICE, HIS MAJESTY'S, Princes Street, Westminster, S.W.1.
STENNING, LIEUT. W. A. H., Firle, Berkhampstead, Herts.
STEVENS, LIEUT. D., South Staffs. Regiment.
STEPHENSON, C.B.E., D.S.O., LIEUT.-COLONEL ROBERT, Benwell Lodge, Newcastle-on-Tyne.
STILL, 2ND LIEUT. G. L., 2nd South Staffs. Regiment.
STOKES, LIEUT.-COLONEL H. (President, R.M.C. Library), Royal Military College.
STRETTON, 2ND LIEUT. D. E. E. T., 2nd South Staffs. Regiment.

TAYLOR, LIEUT.-COLONEL B. H. WATERS (G.S.O.I.), Field Troops, Cairo, Egypt.
TAYLOR, M.C., LIEUT. B. READ, 2nd South Staffs. Regiment.
THOMAS, LIEUT. C. F. PATTEN, 2nd South Staffs. Regiment.
THOMAS, MR. AND MRS. H., 10, Westminster Palace Gardens, London, S.W.1.

Digitized by Google

THORNEYCROFT, MISS E., Tettenhall Towers, Staffs.
THORNEYCROFT, MISS F., Tettenhall Towers, Staffs.
THORNEYCROFT, J.P., GEORGE B., Dunston, Staffs.
THORNEYCROFT, H. D., Tettenhall Towers, Staffs.
TOTTENHAM, MAJOR P. J. L., Hibernian V.S. Club, Dublin.
TOWNSHEND, M.C., MAJOR J. S., The South Staffs. Regiment.
TURNER, LIEUT. G., 1st South Staffs. Regiment.
TURNER, CAPTAIN J. R. TEASDALE, 1st South Staffs. Regiment.
TWISS, CAPTAIN D. C., 1st South Staffs. Regiment.
TYLER, CAPTAIN L. L., Tettenhall Road, Wolverhampton.
TYLER, LEONARD F., The Gables, Elm Street, Bilston.

VALE, LIEUT. W. L., 1st South Staffs. Regiment.

WALSALL FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY (A. MORGAN, Librarian).
WALSHE, C.M.G., LIEUT.-COLONEL H. E. (late S.S. Regiment), Swan Hotel, Lichfield.
WARD, CAPTAIN F., Wellington Club, London, S.W.
WARD, R.S.M., F., 2nd South Staffs. Regiment.
WATSON, 2ND LIEUT. E. C., The South Staffs. Regiment.
WELCHMAN, MAJOR S. C., The South Staffs. Regiment.
WHITEHEAD, J. W., The White House, Tettenhall, Staffs.
WHITEHEAD, T., 10, George Street, Wolverhampton.
WILLCOX, F. D., "Dog and Gun Hotel," Tettenhall.
WINSLOW, 2ND LIEUT. T. E., 2nd South Staffs. Regiment.
WOOF, M.C., CAPTAIN T. N., Acacias, Sutton, Surrey.

YDEWALLE, 2ND LIEUT. A. F. d', 2nd South Staffs. Regiment.
YOOL, D.S.O., MAJOR G. A., The South Staffs. Regiment, Lichfield.

Digitized by Google

INDEX.

Abercrombie, Gen. Sir R., 15, 17, 20, 21.
Achiet le Petit, 200, 406.
Adamson, Lt.-Col. J. S., 430.
Adams, Capt. C. B., 134, 155.
Addison, 2nd Lieut. G. M., 217.
Aitken, 2nd Lieut. A., 341, 398.
Alban, D.S.O., Lt.-Col. C. E. R. G., 346, 351, 354, 367—368.
Alexander, Major J., 78.
Alexander, Lt.-Col. F., 9, 427.
Alexandria, 21, 77, 114.
Allahabad, 98, 117.
Allen, Lt.-Col. N. S., 436.
Allouagne, 164, 301—303.
Alma, Battle of, 70.
American War of Independence, 13, 16, 18.
America, Central, 50.
Amiel, Lt.-Col. C. F., 102—104, 107, 435.
Amiens, 173, 364, 369, 373.
Amigny, 256—258.
Amfroipret, 385, 387.
Andaman Islands, 80th wrecked on, 56.
Anderson, Capt. W. T., 103, 105.
Anglesey, Marquis of, 16, 30—32, 53, 66, 433.
Annezin, 311, 315.
Antigua, 9, 10.
Antwerp, 33, 127, 131, 135, 138, 335.
Anvin, 209.
Appleby, M.C., 2nd Lieut. H., 378, 380, 397, 413.
Archer-Shee, Lieut. G., 134, 146, 154.
Armentieres, 139, 294, 408.
Armistice, The, 234, 386.
Armstrong, Cpl. J. A., 176.
Armstrong, 2nd Lieut. W., 348, 375.
Arqueves, 196, 203.
Arras, 282, 298, 325, 406.
Asiago Plateau, The, 212, 214, 216, 217.
Atkinson, 2nd Lieut. J., 367.
Atkinson, Capt. R. H., 357, 379—380.
Auchmuty, Gen. Sir S., 24—28.
Australian Forces, 198, 205, 408.
Aveluy Wood, 369.
Ayette, 373—374, 377.

Badajoz, Siege of, 34—36.
Bailey, 2nd Lieut. H. G., 378—379.
Bailey, Lieut. G. S., 203.
Baillescourt Farm, 339.
Bailleul, 342, 409.
Baird, Gen. Sir David, 20—24, 30, 32, 52.
Baker, Lt.-Col. N., 54—56, 434.
Baker, Sergt.-Major R., 144, 152—153.
Balaclava, Battle of, 70—71.
Balding, M.M., Pte. W. L., 202.
Ball, Lieut. D. O. W., 275.
Ballinger, M.M., Sergt. E., 215, 222, 236.
Bannaytyne, Lt.-Col. W. S., 147.
Barar, 100.
Barker, Capt. D. H., 114.
Barly, 373.
Barratt, V.C., Pte. T. (7th Bn.), 421.
Bartlett, Lieut. C. F. C., 134, 146—147.
Barwell, Sergt., 114.
Battle Honours, 120.
Battles of the Great War—
  Aisne, 1914, The, 265—268, 273, 276, 281.
  Aisne, 1918, The, 411—413.
  Albert, 143, 333, 370, 373, 377.
  Ancre, 191, 327—334.
  Arleux, 344, 347.
  Arras, 1917, 342, 346—347.
  Arras, 1918, 364, 370, 377—379.
  Bapaume, 1918, 406—407.
  Cambrai, 1917, 352—358.
  Cambrai, 1918, 380—383.
  Canal du Nord, 353—359, 381.
  Festubert, 162—164, 299—301.
  Gheluvelt, 151—155, 207—208, 285.
  Haplincourt, 366—367.
  Loos, 166—171, 303—310.
  Lys, 1918, The, 408—410.
  Marne, 1914, The, 262—264.

Digitized by Google

Mons, 1914, 248—250.
Neuve Chapelle, 1915, 160—161, 293—296.
Piave, The, 1918, 217—232.
Somme, 1916, 177—188, 327—337.
Ypres, 1914, 141—156, 282—289.
Bavai, 126, 385.
Baxter, M.C., Lieut. (Capt.) R., 338, 341, 345, 380.
Bayenghem, 190.
Bazentin le Grand, 181—182.
Beale, Lt.-Col., 84.
Bean, 2nd Lieut. C. R. C., 134, 151—152.
Beaucourt, 369.
Beaulincourt, 368.
Beauman, D.S.O., Lt.-Col. A. B., 160, 162, 164, 188, 190—191, 193, 215, 216.
Beaumont Hamel, 175, 191, 193, 195, 327, 333—334.
Becelaere, 139—140, 152—153, 205, 284.
Becourt, 209.
Beech, 2nd Lieut. J., 325—326.
Behagnies, 198.
Bell, Lieut. A. J., 200.
Bell, Capt. E., 141, 168, 170, 188, 194.
Bell, 2nd Lieut. J., 322, 326.
Bellingham, 2nd Lieut. G. W., 188.
Bellem, 138.
Bellenglise, 417.
Benares, New Colours to 80th, 115.
Bennett, Cpl. J., 223.
Benson, 2nd Lieut. W. R. G., 313.
Benoy, Capt. J. F., 379—380, 383—387, 393.
Bernafay Wood, 330, 332.
Bernard, Gen., 285.
Berry, 2nd Lieut. J., 313, 316, 326.
Bertrancourt, 191—192, 195—196, 211, 334.
Best, Capt. A. D. W., 59—60.
Bethune, 162—163, 171—173, 289—290, 297—299, 301, 306, 311, 319, 347, 351.
Beuvry, 289, 311, 350.
Bevering, 138, 139.
Bhootan, 60, 100.
Bihucourt, 340—341.
Binche, 125—126.
Birch, Lieut. E. R., 264.
Birch, Capt., 46, 48.
Birdwood, Gen., 378.
Bixschoote, 140, 282.
Blackwood, Capt. A. T., 89, 91.
Blairville, 371—373.
Blockey, Capt. H. S., 294—295, 300—301.
Bloomfield, 2nd Lieut. C. W. 342, 344.
Bidassoa, Passage of, 41—43.
Boer War, The, 85—91, 405.
Boisleux-au-Mont, 370, 373.
Bolton Camp, 196.
Bommel, Attack on, 17.
Bomy, 322.
Bona, 2nd Lieut., 368, 380, 383.
Bone, 2nd Lieut. H. W., 170.
Bonner, Lieut. A., 175.
Bonner, D.S.O., Capt. G. S., 134, 143—144, 151—152, 163, 168, 170.
Boone, 2nd Lieut. G. L., 176.
Booth, V.C., Sergt. A., 105, 106.
Booth, Capt. E. W., 177, 183—185, 194.
Booth, Lce.-Cpl., 373.
Borgo Belussi, Capture of, 225, 230.
Bourlon Wood, 352—358.
Bouzincourt, 339.
Bowen, Lord Justice, 114.
Bower, Lieut. H. S., 134, 152, 157.
Bowyer, Col. Sir John, 2, 401.
Boycott, 2nd Lieut. W. G., 325.
Boyd-Moss, C.M.G., D.S.O., Col. L. B., 172, 237, 302—305, 308—312.
Boyelles, 371—372.
Brackenbury, Gen. H., 79—80, 108—109.
Bradbury, 2nd Lieut. C. S., 382—383.
Bradbury, M.C., Capt. S., 119, 168.
Bradish, Lieut., 22.
Bradshaw, Major J. L., 110.
Brandwater Basin, 89.
Branker, Lieut. G. L. D., 87, 91.
Bray-sur-Somme, 126, 176, 345.
Bremen, Retreat to, 17—19.
British Expeditionary Force, 1914, 124—125, 241.
Broadseinde, 152, 205.
Brocklesby, 2nd Lieut. H., 168, 170, 176, 180, 184.
Brooks, 2nd Lieut. F. J., 335—336.
Brooksband, Lieut. T., 113.
Brooksbank, Lieut., 71.
Brown, Lieut. G. W., 382—383.
Browne, 2nd Lieut. J. C. B., 397.
Bruges, 134.
Buckle, Major A. C., 93, 131, 133, 138, 144, 151, 154—155, 160.
Buenos Ayres, 24, 26, 28.
Buire, 181.
Bull, Lieut. L. C., 345.
Bullecourt, Attack on, 198—201.
Bully Grenay, 321—322.
Bunbury, Lt.-Col. T., 54—63, 66, 434.

Digitized by Google

Bunker's Hill, Battle of, 12, 13.
Burgos, Siege of, 38.
Burke, Lieut. H. J., 134, 136, 143, 167—170.
Burmese War, The First, 29, 45—50.
Burmese War, The Second, 62—67.
Burnett, 2nd Lieut. F. P. C., 314—315.
Burney, Lieut., 293.
Burns, Lieut. I., 380, 383—384.
Burt, Capt. C. S., 185—187.
Busaco, Battle of, 34.
Bussingpore, 100.
Bygott, 2nd Lieut. J. F., 189.
Bygrave, 2nd Lieut. G., 189.
Byng, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., M.V.O., Gen. Sir J. H. G., 265, 378, 380, 386.
Bytheway, M.C., D.C.M., C.S.M. F., 145, 156.

CAESTRE, 289.
Caldwell, 2nd Lieut. S., 313, 324.
Calle Maggiore, 219.
Calpee, Capture of, 98.
Cameron, Major J. J., 342, 346.
Camblain Chatelaine, 321—322, 346.
Cambrin Sector, 303, 318.
Campbell, K.C.B., Maj.-Gen. Sir A., 45, 50, 429.
Campbell, Sir Colin, 74—75.
Campbell, Gen. Sir John, 45, 50, 68—69, 429.
Canadian Infantry, 160, 163, 298, 344, 371—372, 383.
Cananore, 22—23, 115.
Canove, Raid on, 217.
Cape of Good Hope, 19, 24, 44.
Capper, C.B., D.S.O., Gen. Sir T., 132, 145, 156, 169.
Carter, D.S.O., M.C., Lt.-Col. W. H., 309, 313—315, 318—319, 326, 331—332.
Caryll, 2nd Lieut. F. A. J., 188.
Cavan, Gen. Lord, 215, 232, 234, 272.
Cave, 2nd Lieut., 340.
Cawnpore, 98, 100.
Chambers, 2nd Lieut. D. M., 176, 189.
Champagni, Lt.-Col. F., 16, 433.
Champagni, Lt.-Col. J., 16, 19, 20, 433.
Chapman, 2nd Lieut. H., 313.
Charleroi, 125—126, 389, 391.
Charrington, M.C., Capt. C.E.W., 300—301, 408.
Chipham, Lieut. E. T., 378—380, 382.
Christie, C.B., Lt.-Col. S. T., 64, 98, 100, 434.
Christopherson, 2nd Lieut. H. C., 298.
Cimetta, Operations at, 212, 229—232.
Colours, The 38th Regt., 84, 85, 93—95.
Colours, The 80th Regt., 17, 21, 63, 66, 115—117, 397.
Collas, D.S.O., Lt.-Col. W. J. J., 373, 377, 380, 399.
Corunna, Battle of, 30—31, 42.
Courcelles, 196—198, 200, 375, 378.
Courtrai, 18, 141—142, 384.
Cox, 2nd Lieut. E. S., 176, 188.
Creagh, Lt.-Col. C. A. F., 102, 104—106, 108, 110, 113, 436.
Crimean War, The, 68—74.
Croisilles, Attack on, 196—198, 201.
Crosse, M.C., Lieut. E. P., 189—191.
Crousaz, Lieut. C. F., 134, 154.
Cuidad Rodrigo, Capture of, 34, 38.
Cuinchy, 289, 292, 297, 304—306, 313.
Cumming, Gen. H. R., 191, 200.
Cuppage, Capt., 89.
Curry, D.S.O., Capt. W. H., 189, 197, 207, 209.
Cuxson, M.C., Capt. S. G., 214, 221—222, 226.

DALE, Lce.-Cpl., 187.
Dalrymple, M.P., Viscount Major, 150.
Daly, Gen. A. C., 300, 309, 311, 316, 326, 229, 333.
Dartmouth, The Earl of, 84, 118, 403.
Daubeney, C.B.E., D.S.O., Brig.-Gen. E. K., 105, 115—118, 437.
Davidson, C.B., Brig.-Gen. C. S., 272, 292, 298, 301, 305, 437.
Davies, C.B., Brig.-Gen. R. H., 124, 242, 252.
Dawes, D.S.O., M.C., Lt.-Col. G., 325, 331, 337, 342, 346, 351.
Dean, Col., 44.
Delville Wood, 175, 185—187, 328—331, 333.
Demain, 22.
Dent, D.S.O., M.C., Major J. L., 281—283.
Desert March, Egypt, 21.
Despicht, M.C., 2nd Lieut. L. T., 292—293.
De Wet, Gen., 90.
Diary of Major J. L. Dent, 241—280.

Digitized by Google

Dick, K.C.B., Gen. Sir R., 61—63.
Dickebusch, 206—207.
Dickens, M.C., Capt. W. A., 189—190, 197.
Donabew, Attack on, 48—65.
Doran, Brig.-Gen., 275.
Douvre River, Raid on, 189.
Draycott-Wood, 2nd Lieut. W., 303.
Duckworth, Capt. R., 259, 264.
"Duck's Bill," The, 172, 292, 294, 304.
"Dumbell and *Express* Fund," 235.
Dunlop, Capt. J. F. S., 131, 134—135, 146—147.
Duren, Colours parade at, 397.
Dutton, 2nd Lieut. C., 301, 317, 329.
Dutton, Capt. G., 339, 375, 378, 383.

EARLE, Gen., 79—83, 149.
Earle, Col., 149.
Eaton, Lieut. G. H. L., 189, 229.
Edwards, Lt.-Col., 23, 434.
Egypt, 20—21.
Egypt, War in, 77—84.
Elands River, 90.
Elles, Lt.-Col. W. K., 73, 76, 431.
Elliot, Major W. W. D., 107.
Elmhurst, C.B., Col. C., 78.
English-Murphy, D.S.O., M.C., Lt.-Col. W. R., 176, 179, 183—185, 195, 205, 215, 233, 237.
Ervillers, Attack on, 375, 377, 380.
Evans, Lieut. D. C., 134, 136, 142, 144.
Evans, Major, 43, 46—47.
Evans, Capt. T. W. R., 302, 308—309, 313.
Evelegh, Col., 99, 100.
Eyre, Lt.-Col. P. H., 77—78, 80, 83—84, 113, 149, 431.

FANSHAW, C.B., Gen. R., 297—299, 302.
Fawcett, Lieut. R. W., 307, 309.
Fermoy, Depôt at, 52.
Ferozepore, 57, 59.
Ferozeshah, Battle of, 59—61, 166.
Ficksburg, 87—89, 91.
"Fighting Koppee," Attack on the, 108.
Fillingham, 2nd Lieut. J., 379—381.
Firman, Col., 89—90.
Flanders, 17—18, 203, 290.
Fletcher, Cpl., 189—190.
Flowers,, D.C.M., M.S.M., C.S.M. A., 191, 204.
Fluke, D.S.O., Capt. W. G., 304, 309, 313, 321, 332, 337, 341.
Forbes, Lt.-Col., 23, 434.
Forster, Capt., 42.
Foster, Capt., 38.
Foster, Lieut. W. A. P., 93, 134, 155.
Fox, Lt.-Col. H., 428.
Freer, Ensign, 36—37.
French, Gen. Sir John, 124—126, 145, 153, 161, 166, 174, 256, 293, 294, 298, 316.
Frith, Major, 49, 429.

GARDNER, C.S.M. G., 195, 202, 204.
Gavin, Pte. J., 368.
George V., H.M. King, 93—95, 157, 172, 233, 242, 289, 312—313.
Ghent, 135, 137, 384.
"Gibson's Crater," 215.
Gilbert, Gen. Sir W. R., 58—60.
Givenchy, 289, 292—294, 303—304, 311, 318, 347—350.
Glassington, 2nd Lieut. C., 397.
Gleed, M.C., Lieut. R. W. A., 379—380, 383, 399.
Gloster, 2nd Lieut. J. L., 189.
Glover, D.S.O., M.C., Major G. de C., 96, 300—301.
Glover, Capt. R. F. B., 91.
Gordon, Gen. C. G., 78—82.
Gordon, Lieut. R. H., 71.
Gorell, Lord, Poem by, 287.
Gough, C.B., Gen. H. de la P., 164, 365.
Gower, Col. Lord G. L., 402.
Grant, 2nd Lieut. B. C., 393, 399.
Grave di Papadopoli, 218.
Great Dragon Pagoda, 64—66.
Green, Capt. C. H., 134, 136, 143, 152.
Green, 2nd Lieut. E. F., 382—383, 399.
Greenfield, Lieut., 113.
Greville, Col. Sir Charles, 36—43, 429.
Grogan, Capt. E. B., 87, 91.
Guadaloupe, Capture of, 9—11, 15.
Guillemont, Attack on, 330—332.
Guinchy, Capture of, 186—188.
Gunner, D.S.O., Major F. H., 299.
Gyde, Capt. A. A. E., 274.

HAIG, SIR DOUGLAS, 124, 126, 141, 146—147, 153, 174, 197, 293, 316, 326, 329, 337, 352, 378.
Hall, Lieut. B., 308—309, 312.
Hall, Lieut. G. B., 382.
Hall, Lieut. R. M., 304.
Hall, Lieut. W., 300—301.
Hall, 2nd Lieut. Warwick, 176—179.

Digitized by Google

Hallam, Lieut. V. J., 178, 300—301.
Halloy Camp, 370.
Haly, C.B., Lt.-Col. W. O'Grady, 430.
Hambleton, M.M., Sergt. H., 392, 397.
Hamel, Lieut. A. de, 299, 301, 303, 307, 309.
Harmignies, 125, 248—249.
Harper, Major J. O. R., 353.
Harper, 2nd Lieut. E. H., 320.
Harper, M.C., Major S., 351, 377, 383, 393, 399.
Harris, 2nd Lieut. J. St. C. G., 392—393.
Harrismith, 88—90.
Harrison, Lt.-Col. R. P., 101, 435.
Hassell, D.S.O., M.C., Major L. L., 163, 205—206, 215, 232.
Hast, Lieut. A. W., 103—105, 113.
Harvey, Ensign J., 17.
Haulchin, 388—389.
Havrincourt Wood, 352, 362, 379.
Hawkes, Lt.-Col. R., 435.
Hazelgrove, M.C., D.C.M., Lieut. A., 92, 283, 339.
Hazelwood, 2nd Lieut. F. L., 283.
Heath, Col., 169.
Hedauville, 369—370.
Heild, 2nd Lieut. V., 209.
Henderson, 2nd Lieut. L. E., 162, 170, 187—188.
Henning, C.B., Lt.-Col. S., 76, 431.
Hesdigneul, 312.
Hewart, Lieut. G. M. F., 295—296.
Hewetson, Lieut. J. D., 173, 413.
Hibberdine, Lieut. R. L., 179, 189.
High Wood, Attack on, 182—184.
Hind, 2nd Lieut. C. R., 314, 325—326.
Hindenburg Line, The, 196—198, 352.
Hindsley, Lieut. E., 179, 189, 197.
Hodgson, Lieut. R. E., 300.
Hohenzollern Redoubt, 166—171.
Holmes, Lieut. L. F., 134, 144.
Hooge, 139, 164—165, 204.
Hopkins, R.S.M. C., 176.
Horne, Gen. H. S., 291, 301, 351, 378.
Horton, Sergt., 108—109.
Horsbrugh, Lt.-Col. A. B., 83—85, 103, 108, 431.
Houle, Lieut. S. H., 209, 378—380, 392, 397.
Howard, Capt. W., 102, 106, 108, 110.
Hutchison, Lt.-Col. G., 64, 66, 434.
Hughes, 2nd Lieut. A. S. R., 302
Hume, Lieut. G. C., 134, 147, 151, 152.

INDIAN CORPS, 289, 299, 300.
Indian Mutiny, 38th in, 74—76.
Indian Mutiny, 80th in, 98—100.
Inkerman, Battle of, 71.
Intombi River Drift, 105, 107.
Isle de Dieu, 19.

JACKSON, D.C.M., C.S.M. S., 202, 209.
Jamaica, 5—6, 50.
James, M.V.O., D.S.O., Lt.-Col. A. H. C., 399.
James, Lieut. D. C., 308—309.
Jardine, C.S.M., 319.
Johnson, Lieut. A. H., 189.
Johnson, Capt. A. D., 302, 308—309.
Johnson, 2nd Lieut. H., 344, 383, 398.
Jones, Col. James, 7—9, 427.
Jones, Pte. John, 147.
Jones, Lieut. W. H., 377—378.
Jones-Mitton, Lieut. G. H., 187.

KAVANAGH, M.C., Lieut. M. J., 302—303, 309, 313.
Kay, Major G. O., 345, 368.
Keary, Capt. H. P., 313, 337.
Kelly, C.B., Lt.-Col. T. C., 74, 430
Kelsey, M.C., Capt. S. J., 378—379.
Kempster, D.S.O., Brig.-Gen. F., 173.
Kemmendine, Capture of, 48.
Kendal, Lieut. R. A., 380.
Kendrick, D.S.O., M.C., Capt. F. A., 204, 214, 220—221, 224, 226, 230—231.
Khartum, 78—80, 82.
Kilby, V.C., M.C., Capt. A. F. G., 286, 302, 307, 309.
King, Lieut. C. W., 309, 312.
King, 2nd Lieut. B. J., 379—381.
King, D.C.M., C.S.M. O. M., 392, 397.
Kinnaird, Capt. C. H., 162.
Kirbekan, Battle of, 82—84.
Kirkpatrick, C.B.E., Lt.-Col. I., 115, 119, 437.
Kitson, 2nd Lieut. B. F., 189.
Klein Zillebeke, 154—155.
Knocker, Major A. J., 337.
Korti, 80.
Kortwright, Capt. C. W., 317, 321.
Kruseik, Fighting at, 148—149, 153.

LA BASSEE, 166, 171, 173, 282, 289, 291, 293, 297, 306, 319.
La Gorgue, 161, 162.
La Mesge, 173.
La Vacquiere, 361, 366.

Digitized by Google

Laffans Plain, Review on, 92.
Lake, Capt. W., 317, 329.
Landrecies, 246, 254.
Lane, Lieut. J. A., 378, 380.
Langemarck, 140, 283.
Langenfeldt, 398.
Laventie Station, 161.
Lawford, C.B., Brig.-Gen. S.T.B., 133, 140—142, 146, 154, 156, 164—165.
Layton, Major E., 115, 119.
Lebucquiere, 367, 368.
Le Cateau, 124, 255, 283, 285.
Le Quesnoy, 318.
Le Touret, 291, 299, 320.
Le Transloy, 368.
Lee, M.C., Capt. A. W., 162, 194, 204, 213.
Legg, Lieut. G. P. W., 393, 397.
Legnano, 210.
Leith, Gen., 33, 37.
Leland, Capt. H. J. C., 189.
Lens, 162, 298, 305, 378.
Leslie, Lieut., 56.
Lewisham, Lord, 401.
Lewis, Capt. H., 173.
Lichfield, C.Q.M.S. W. H., 332.
Lichfield Cathedral, 118.
Lichfield Cathedral—
  80th Monument, 66.
  38th Memorial Window, 92.
  Colours of Service Bns., 424.
Lillingston, Col. Luke, 2, 5—8, 427.
Lillingston, Major J., 6.
Lillers, 164, 172, 302, 351.
Limbery, Capt. C. G., 167—168, 170, 177, 179, 256, 270.
Lindop, Lieut. A. H., 105.
Littler, Gen. Sir J., 58—59.
Littlewood, Pte., 268—269.
Livingstone, Lieut. R. H., 200.
Lloyd, Lieut. J. P., 177, 179.
Lockett, D.C.M., M.M., C.S.M. T., 202, 213.
Loder-Symonds, Major J. F., 133, 138, 142, 151, 154.
Lomax, Major-Gen. S. H., 283.
Longmore, Lieut. T. H., 189.
Longueval Alley, 329—330, 332.
Loos, 303, 321.
Lord, Capt., 163.
Loupart Wood, 340—341.
Louth, C.B., Lt.-Col. J. J., 51, 68, 70, 73, 429.
Louvencourt, 336.
Loveridge, Capt. S. G., 398, 399.
Lowther, Col. Sir C., 227.
Lucas, Lt.-Col. G., 427—428.
Lucknow, Siege of, 74, 75, 77.
Lynde, 209.
Lyndhurst Camp, 19, 132—134.
McBEAN, Gen., 45, 47.
McCreagh, Gen., 45, 46, 48.
McFadden, Sergt., 73.
McGeorge, Lieut. W. H., 134, 150, 152, 167, 170.
"Machine Gun House," Attack on, 332.
Mailly Mallett, 190—192, 194, 196, 334, 336, 369.
Malabar, Nair Rebellion, 22.
Malakoff, Assault on the, 72.
Maldonado, Landing at, 25.
Malloon, Capture of, 49.
Malpass, Lieut. J. L., 323, 326, 329.
Malta, 53, 54, 76.
Mametz, 178—179, 181—185.
Mangeri, Old books found at, 115.
Maples, Capt. K. J., 300—301.
Marlborough, Col. G. (3rd Duke), 428.
Martinique, Capture of, 11, 15.
Martin, 2nd Lieut. H. R. C., 298.
Mason, Sergt., 147.
Maubeuge, 387—388.
Maxfield, Lieut. L., 399.
Medals, 21, 43, 50, 63, 66, 74, 76, 78, 92, 100, 102, 115.
Melville, Lt.-Col. R., 9—11.
Menin, 18, 140—141, 152—153, 208
Menin Road, 145, 165, 204, 207.
Messines, 152, 199.
Meuse, The River, 378, 391—393.
Micmas Camp, 203.
Middleberg, 80th at, 104.
Miles, Lt.-Col., 37, 84, 429.
Military Children's School, 15.
Militia, The Staffordshire, 2—3, 16, 52, 65—66, 401—413.
Miller, D.S.O., M.C., Lieut. A. B., 399—413.
Miller, Lieut. G. T., 269.
Minden Post, 177.
Minshull-Ford, Brig.-Gen. J. R. M., 185.
Miraumont, 339, 369.
Molin River, 88.
Moolman's Spruit, 91.
"Momber's Crater," 325.
Mons, 125, 127, 250—262, 385.
Montauban, 185, 188, 327—329.
Monte Video, Attack on, 25—26.
Monticano, Crossing the, 228—230.
Mœuveres, 353—354, 360.
Moodkee, Battle of, 58, 61, 63.
Moore, Gen. Sir John, 29—32.
Moore, Lt.-Col. W., 436.
Moor-Radford, Lieut. L. C., 134, 152.
Morgan, C.M.G., D.S.O., Lt.-Col. R. W., 237, 300—301, 309, 312—313, 316, 318, 322, 325, 330, 433.

Digitized by Google

Moriarty, Capt. D. B., 103, 105.
Moplah Campaign, 115.
Mormal, Forest of, 384—385.
Mory, Capture of, 341.
Morris, Major R. J., 177, 179, 188, 194.
Morris, D.S.O., Lt.-Col. S. E., 333, 345.
Morris, Lt.-Col. V., 427.
Moussy, 267—269, 273—274.
Mozin, C.Q.M.S. F. T., 174.
Munich Trench, Capture of, 193—200.
Munro, G.C.B., Gen. Sir C. C., 124, 242, 283, 291.
Munster Fusiliers, 292.
Mutlow, D.C.M., Pte., 271—272.
"Mystery Corner," 186.

NAVAL BRIGADE, at Antwerp, 135, 138.
Neuville St. Vaast, 326.
Newdigate, Major F., 403.
New South Wales, Convict guarding, 54—55.
New York, 13—14.
New Zealand Division, 379.
Nideggan, 396.
Niergnies, 383.
Nive, Battle of, 42—43.
Noyelles, 166, 382.
Nugent, Lt.-Col. J., 27—28, 33, 36—37, 429.

O'BRIEN, Lieut., 46.
O'Connell, Sir M. C., 55.
Old Comrades' Association, 119.
Oppy Wood, Attack and Capture of, 342—345.
Orival Wood, 381.
Orme, M.C., Lt.-Col. E. R., 370, 373.
Ormsby, Major, 64, 66.
Orrow, 2nd Lieut. W. H., 313.
Ostend, 18, 127, 134.
Ovens, C.M.G., Brig.-Gen. R. M., 93, 96, 131—136, 140—147, 151—156, 162—177, 181—185, 235, 432.
Oxlade, 2nd Lieut., 340.

PARIS, Advance on, 126, 267.
Parker, Rev. W., 232.
Parker, 2nd Lieut. G. E., 134.
Parkes, Capt. T. D., 168, 170, 175, 207.
Parkin, Major F. H., 93.
Parnis, Capt. H. W., 167.
Paschendaele Ridge, 203, 208, 284, 381.
Patricia Camp, 201—202.
Patshull Hall, 84.
Pegu, Capture of, 64, 66.
Pelly, C.M.G., D.S.O., Gen. R. T., 200, 224, 233.
Peninsular War, 30—42.
Penketh, 2nd Lieut. A. T., 183, 200.
Perak, Expedition to, 102.
Perrin, Capt. G. D., 322, 336.
Philcox, 2nd Lieut. C. E., 189, 200.
Phipps, A/Capt. R. P., 299, 309, 312—313, 321—322, 329, 336.
Piave, The, 217—232.
Piazzola, 210.
Picton, Gen., 34—35.
Pietre Fort, 160.
Pigot, Gen. Sir R., 12—14, 428.
Pilkem, 282—283.
Piper, Lt.-Col. H., 46—50, 429.
Pitt, Lt.-Col. G. D., 53—54, 434.
Plumer, Gen., 378, 384.
Polderhoek Ridge, 206.
Polygon Wood, 147—148, 153, 204—205.
Pont Fixe, 171—172, 297.
Poole, 2nd Lieut. G. W., 377, 379.
Pordenone, March to, 231.
Portbury, Capt., 367.
Potchefstroom, 109—110.
Pothin, 2nd Lieut., 176.
Potter, 2nd Lieut. E. J., 380.
Potter, D.S.O., 2nd Lieut. J., 178, 183—184.
Poulton, Lieut. H. E., 209.
Powell, M.C., 2nd Lieut., 379—380, 398.
Powell, 2nd Lieut. J. H., 313—315.
Pretoria, 103—104, 107, 110.
Pringle, Bart., Lt.-Col. Sir N. W. D., 85, 113, 431.
Prinsloo's Surrender, 88.
Prior, Lt. A. P., 300—301, 313—315.
Prior, Lt.-Col. J. E. H., 102, 106, 110, 113, 436.
Pritchard, Lt. A. J. L., 313, 356.
Protherick, L/Cpl., 145.
Pullen, Lieut. R. S., 209.
Purcell, 2nd Lieut. T., 380, 383, 398.

RAILWAY TRIANGLE (Givenchy), 310.
Raitt, K.C.I.E., C.B., Maj.-Gen. Sir H. A., 92, 108, 432.
Ram, Capt. G. E., 317, 321.
Ramsay, Lt.-Col., 19—20, 433.
Ramsbottom, D.S.O., Lt. G. O., 221.
Rancheval, 194.
Rangoon, 46, 64, 114.
Rankin, 2nd Lieut. R., 344, 348.
Ransford, Capt. G. C., 134, 145, 149, 152.

Digitized by Google

Rauscedo, Advance to, 232.
Rawlinson, Gen. Sir H., 127, 137, 140—141, 153, 180, 184, 378, 380.
Records, 38th, Destroyed by fire, 50—51.
Records, 80th, Lost in shipwreck, 20.
Reform Bill Riots, 52—53.
Reed, 2nd Lieut. T. P., 313, 320.
Renny, 2nd Lieut. G. S., 397—398.
Rhine, March to the, 387—397.
Rhyader Camp, 119.
Richardson, Lt.-Col. A. J., 325.
Richardson, 2nd Lieut. R. J., 295—296.
Richebourg St. Vaast, 299, 301.
Richmond Barracks, Dublin, 111.
Ricketts, 2nd Lieut. C. H., 380, 382.
Ridout, 2nd Lieut. G. J., 378, 383.
Rifle, Lee-Metford, Issue of, 85.
Riley, M.C., R.Q.M.S. A., 211, 215, 225, 230.
Riley, 2nd Lieut. R. R., 134, 149—150, 152.
River Column, The, 79—84.
Roberts, Lord, 89.
Robinson, M.C., Capt. F., 221, 224, 226.
Robinson, Segt. S., 202.
Roclincourt, 342, 345—346.
Rocquigny, 360—364, 366.
Roleia, Battle of, 29.
Romarin Camp, 189—190.
Ross, Pte., 226.
Routledge, Lt.-Col. P. C. L., 118, 292—294, 300, 302.
Roverbasso, 231.
Roveredo, 210.
Rowarth, Capt., 108.
Rowlands, V.C., Col. H., 104, 106.
Rowledge, Sergt., 323.
Royal, 2nd Lieut. H. J., 378.
Ruesnes, 384—385.
Rue d'Ouvert, 163.
Rue de l'Epinette, 299.
Ruggles-Brise, Gen., 151.
Rundle, Gen. Sir L., 86—90.
Russell, 2nd Lieut. J. A., 321, 325.
Rutherford, 2nd Lieut. G. J., 245, 256, 269.

SABBEN, Capt. H. H., 300—301.
Sadler, Corp., 323.
St. Leger, 196, 198, 201.
St. Michale di Piave, 221—222.
St. Omer, 190.
Saldanha Bay, 19, 24.
Salamanca, Battle of, 37.
San Sebastien, 40—41.
Saunders, Lt.-Col. A., 85, 431.
Savage-Armstrong, Capt. F. S. N., 91, 157.
Savage, Lt.-Col. H. C., 85, 431.
Savage, C.B.E., D.S.O., Lt.-Col. M. B., 107, 126, 245, 247, 250, 255—260, 262, 270—272, 274, 277, —278, 281, 283, 399.
Schon, Lt. G. B., 167—170.
Scott, Lt. B. J. H., 256, 261, 282.
Scott, M.C., Capt. W. Logan, 232.
Scrimgeour, M.M., Pte. T., 213
Scutari, 68.
Searle, 2nd Lieut. T. H., 323, 344.
Sears, Lt.-Col. J. W., 92—96, 432.
Seckington, Lieut. F., 183—184.
Sekukuni's Kraal, 104, 108, 109.
Selborne, Lord, 117.
Serapigni, Capture of, 50.
Seringapatam, 23.
Serre Ridge, 195—196, 333, 335.
Sheffield, Lieut. G. A. C., 209.
Shore, Lieut. H. K., 134, 163.
Shoubridge, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., Gen. T. H., 208—209, 227, 233, 237.
Sikh War, 57—63.
Silcock, Lieut. A., 302, 309.
Simmonds, Pte., 281.
Simree Fort, 99—100.
Slingsby, Lieut. E. H., 375, 377, 380—381.
Smalley, Capt., 376.
Smart, 2nd Lieut. E., 378—379, 393.
Smith, Capt., 163.
Smith, 2nd Lieut. B. J., 380—381.
Smith, Lt.-Col. H. C., 101, 435.
Smith, Gen. Sir H. Dorrien, 126, 255, 293.
Smith, Lt.-Col. J. W. S., 50, 430.
Smith, M.M., Sergt. J. H., 392, 397.
Smith, Major P. E. B. F., 342, 399.
Smith, Lt.-Col. J. W., 113, 436.
Smith, 2nd Lieut. S. H., 313—315.
Smith, Major W. C., 370.
Smyth, 2nd Lieut., 187.
Snape, M.C., Capt. J., 167, 174, 177—178, 194.
Snodgrass, Capt. J. J., 45—47.
Sobraon, Battle of, 61.
Soudan Wars, 78—84.
SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE REGIMENT, THE GREAT WAR :—
Record of 1st Battalion, 1914. 131—158. Left South Africa, 131. Mobilization, 132. Officers, 134. In Belgium, covering withdrawal from Antwerp, 135—138. First battle of Ypres, 139—156.

Digitized by Google

Trench Warfare, 158. Records and Stores lost, 146. Battle of Gheluvelt, Capt. J. F. Vallentin wins V.C., 155. Casualties, 144, 145, 147, 149, 151—152, 154—156.

——— 1915. 159—174. Trench Warfare, 159—166, 171—174. Battle of Neuve Chapelle, 160—161. Inspections, 161—162, 164, 172. Battle of Festubert, 160—164. Fighting round Hooge, 164—165. Battle of Loos, 161—171. German counter-attack, 171—172. Sports, 173—174. Promotions, 174. Casualties, 163—164, 170.

——— 1916. 175—192. Trench Warfare, 175—177. Bray-sur-Somme, 176. Battles of the Somme, 177—188. Capture of Dantzig Alley, 178. Mametz, 179. Attack on High Wood, 182—184. Capture of Delville Wood, 185—188. Capture of Ginchy, 188. Raid on German trench, 189. Trench Warfare, 190—191. Sports, 175, 185. Casualties, 175—176, 179, 184, 188.

——— 1917. 193—211. Attack on Munich Trench, 193. Changes in Bn. Staff, 194. Attack on Serre Ridge, 195—196. Capture of Croisilles, 196—197. Trench Warfare, 198, 201. Attack on Bullecourt, 199—200. Training, 203. The great battles of October, 204—209. The move to Italy, 210—211. Sports, 195, 196, 203. Casualties, 194, 197—198, 200, 202—209.

——— 1918. 212—237. In Italy, on the Montella, 212—213. The Asiago Plateau, 214—216—217. Raid at Vaister, 214—215. Lt.-Col. A. B. Beauman vacates Command, 216. Raid on Canove, 217. Crossing the Piave, 217—222. Advance and capture of villages, 223—227. Crossing the Monticano, 227. Capture of Tezze, Borgo Belussi, and Vazzola, 224—227. Cimetta captured, 229. The fighting spirit of the old 38th, 230. Advance to Rauscedo, 231—232. The Austrian Armistice, 232. In billets, Demobilization schemes, 234—236. Sports, 212—213, 215, 235—237. Casualties, 215, 217. Home again, 237.

Record of 2nd Battalion, 1914. 241—290. Major J. L. Dent's Diary, 241—280. Landing in France, 243. The advance to Mons, 246—250. Retreat from Mons, 250—262. Saving the guns, 259—260. Battle of the Marne, 262—264. Battle of the Aisne, 265—280. Raid at Beaulne Spur, 281. First battle of Ypres, 282—288. How they held the Trench, 287. Trench Warfare, 248—252. Refitting, 275. Defence of Givenchy, 289—290. Casualties, 259—260, 264, 269—272, 274—276, 283—284.

——— 1915. 291—316. Trench Warfare, 291—295, 303—305, 309—314. La Bassée area, 291—292. Changes in Bn. Command, 292, 305, 312. At Givenchy, 294—295. Trench raids, 292—293. Battle of Neuve Chapelle, 293—297. Battle of Festubert, 299—301. Lt.-Col. P. C. L. Routledge killed, 300. Battle of Loos, V.C. won by Capt. A. F. G. Kelley in the attack on Railway Triangle, 307. Inspection, 312—313. "Gibson's Crater," 314—315. Casualties, 293, 296, 298, 301, 303—304, 307—309, 311, 314—315.

——— 1916. 317—337. Trench Warfare, 318—323, 330—334. Re-organisation, 317. Mining activity, 321. Raids on German trenches at Calonne, 323—324. Attack on "Momber's Crater," 325. The Somme Battles, 326—337. In Delville Wood, 328—329. Attack on Guillemont, 330—332. Attack on "Machine Gun House," 332. The battle of the Ancre, 335. Sports, 317—318. Casualties, 319, 321, 326, 329, 332, 336.

——— 1917. 338—359. Trench Warfare, 338—343, 346—349, 355—359. Attack on Bailles-court Farm, 339. The great German retreat, 340—341. Capture of Mory, 341. Attack and capture of Oppy Wood, 343—344. Lt.-Col. G. Dawes wounded, 342. Battle of Cambrai, 353—358. Epic of Bourlon Wood, 355—357.

Digitized by Google

Sports, 350. Casualties, 340, 342, 344—345, 348, 351, 357, 359.
——— 1918. 360—399. Trench Warfare, 360—364. The great German Offensive, 365—374. Battle of Haplincourt, Lt.-Col. Alban wounded, 368. Heroic stand of "A" Company, 367. Counter-attack by South Staffords, 371. The advance to victory, 376—377. Good work by "D" Company at Ervillers, 375—376. Fighting on the Canal du Nord, 381. The Armistice, 385—386. The March to the Rhine, 387 397. At Langenfeldt, 398. Record of 1918 fighting, 398. Return home, 399. Sports, 373. Casualties, 361, 363, 367—369, 372—375, 377—379, 381—382, 384, 400.
Record 3rd and 4th Battalions. 401—413. Casualties, 407—410, 413. Honours awarded, 408, 411, 413.
——— 5th and 6th Battalions. 414—417.
——— 2/5th and 2/6th Battalions, 417—419.
——— 7th (Service) Battalion. 419—422.
——— 8th (Service) Battalion. 422—423.
——— 9th (Service) Battalion. 423—424.
——— Other Battalions. 424.
Soupir, 269—270. 273—274.
Sparks, C.B., Lt.-Col., J. P., 73, 430.
Spicer, 2nd Lieut. S. T., 322, 332.
Sphinx Badge, 21.
Stackpoole, Lieut. G. W. R., 91.
Steele, Brig.-Gen. R., 165, 172.
Steward, Lt.-Col. H. W., 432.
Swynearde, 135, 137.

TATE, Capt. H. G., 321, 324, 340.
Thabanchu, 86—87.
Thackwell, Lt.-Col. W. de W. R., 76—78, 431.
Thiepval, 327, 334.
Thomas, Lieut. A. G., 302.
Thomas, Lt.-Col. W. G., 85, 431.
Thompson, M.C., Lieut. H. D., 220.
Tomlinson, Lieut. F. R. J., 134, 150—152.
Tottenham, Major, 115.
Townsend, Lieut. J. S., 294—296.
Townsend, Major, 260, 265.
Trafford, Lieut. C. de., 179.
Trafford, M.C., Capt. E. de, 183.
Trafford, M.C., Capt. H. J. de, 133, 162, 167, 170, 221—222, 224, 226.
Trafford, Capt. V. de, 134, 136, 152.
Trefusis, Gen. the Hon. J. F., 312.
Trevarthen, Lieut. A. F. V. A., 302, 309.
Tudway, Col., 90.
Tucker, Gen. Sir C., 93, 101—104, 107, 111, 159, 171, 315, 435.
Tunnicliffe, Lieut. O. A., 183.
Turner, Cpl., 281.
Twemlow, Lt.-Col. G. H., 435.
Twiss, Capt. D. C., 134, 149, 152, 185, 189, 194, 198.
Tyler, Major C. J. R., 101—102, 106.

UDALL, Lieut. R. G., 398—399.
Ulster Division, 353.
Ulundi, Capture of, 106—107.
U.S.A. Troops, 372, 374.
Ussher, Lieut. B. W., 105—106

VAISTER, Raid at, 214.
Vallentin, V.C., Capt. J. F., 131, 134—135, 141, 151, 155.
Varna, Fire at, 68—69.
Vassall, Lt.-Col. S. T., 12, 25—26, 428.
Vantier, Lieut., 377—378.
Vazzola, Raid on, 225—227.
Vendrame, Capture of, 221.
Vermelles 165—166, 311, 315.
Vimiera, Battle of, 29.
Vimy Ridge, 325—326, 342, 346.
Vinden, 2nd Lieut. E. S., 378, 383, 399.
Vittoria, Battle of, 39—40.
Volunteers, Staffordshire, 3, 16, 414.

WADSWORTH, 2nd Lieut. A., 378, 383.
Walcheren Expedition, 33.
Wales, H.R.H. Prince of, 126, 257, 289.
Walker, V.C., C.B., Gen. W. G., 325, 330, 336.
Wallis, 2nd Lieut. H. R., 380, 383, 392, 397.
Walsall, 235, 237.
Walsh, D.S.O., Brig.-Gen. R. M., 341.
Walshe, C.M.G., Lt.-Col. H. E., 162, 168, 322.
Wansbrough, Capt. W. E., 322, 329.
Wassall, V.C., Pte. W., 104.
Watkins, L/Cpl., 274.

Digitized by Google

Watts, K.C.B., C.M.G., Gen. Sir H., 173—175, 180, 190.
Welchman, Major S. C., 131, 133, 136, 150, 152.
Werge, Capt., 31.
West, M.C., Capt. J., 313, 329, 348, 376, 380.
Weston, 2nd Lieut. R. C., 378.
Whaley, Lt.-Col. B., 427.
White, Capt. F. H., 92, 133—134, 139, 151—152.
White, Capt. G., 177, 179.
Whitehead, 2nd Lieut. A. P., 320.
Williams, Major G. A. S., 317—318.
Williams, Major, 90—91.
Williams, 2nd Lieut. H. S., 383.
Willis, Lt.-Col. F. A., 76, 430.
Willshire, Col. T., 32, 36, 37, 41, 43—45.
Wilson, Capt., 283.
Wilson, K.C.B., Gen. Sir H. H., 321, 326.
Wilson, Major A. E. C., 339.
Windsor Castle, 119, 402—403.
Winkler, 2nd Lieut. J. P. B., 380, 381.
"Woburn Abbey," 173.
Wolseley, F.-M. Lord, 65, 77, 79—80, 82, 106—110, 113.
Wolverhampton, 14, 124.
Wolverson, R.Q.M.S. L., 174.
Wood, V.C., Gen. Sir E., 82, 106—107.
Wood, Lt.-Col. R. B., 63, 434.
Wood, Lieut. W. D., 295, 301.
Woof, 2nd Lieut. T. N., 199—200, 202, 217.
Woolley, M.C., M.M., Capt. C. R., 339, 341, 349, 376, 379, 380, 382.
Wright, 2nd Lieut., 340.
Wright, 2nd Lieut., 371.
Wrightson, Lieut. E., 379—380, 383, 399.
Wrottesley, Sir John, 2, 401.

Yeo, Lieut. L. F., 261, 296.
Young, K.C.B., Lt.-Gen. G. S., 93.
Young, Capt., 100.
Young, Lt.-Col., 169.
Yool, D.S.O., Major G. A., 399.
Ypres, 18, 139, 143, 284, 293, 298, 333, 348.
Yser, River, 139.

Zand, River, 89.
Zandvoorde, 140, 148, 152—154, 281, 284, 286.
Zeebrugge, 134.
Zillebeke, 204—206.
Zonnebeke, 142—146, 152, 281, 283, 286.
Zulu War, 103—108.
Zwartelen, 155.

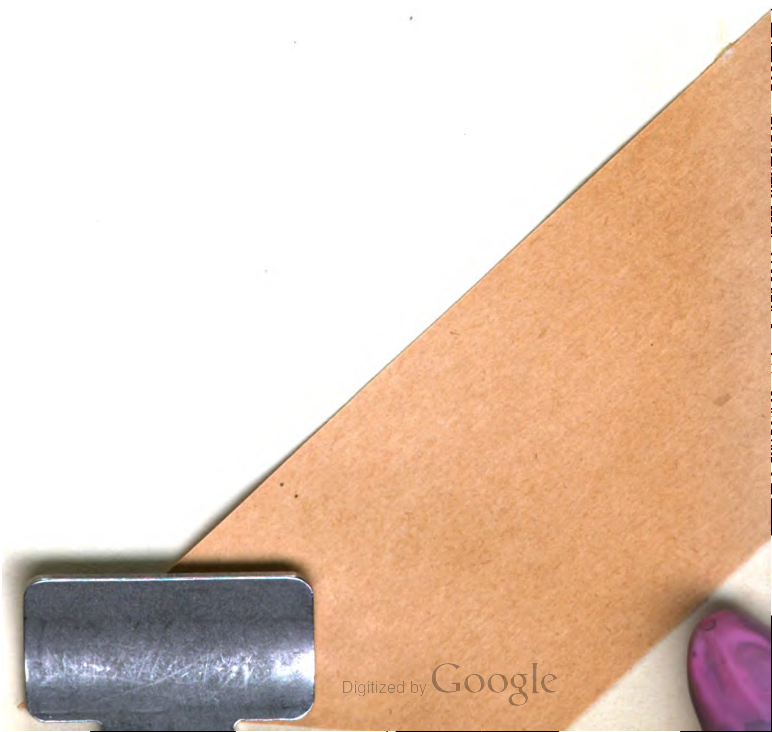
Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
3 9015 03951 0006



Digitized by Google

